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A HISTORY

OF

OTEGO

New

York

By

STUART BANYAR BLAKELY

CRIST, SCOTT & PARSHALL,  
Cooperstown, N. Y.



1254259

“On the grave-posts of our fathers  
Are no signs, no figures painted;  
Who are in those graves we know not,  
Only know they are our fathers.”



This little book is the result of the past four summers' work in searching old records, consulting books and articles that bear upon local history and talking with those who, by age or interest, are authorities. An endeavor has been made, by fair search and impartial judgment, to bring together data of local interest, particularly such that exist only in men's memory. It has been impossible, in the time at my disposal, to gather all the facts that may be found recorded. To name all the occupants, or even the first settlers, of every farm would be an unprofitable and probably an impossible task. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that many of the early settlers were very transient.

A few explanations of the text may be needed. The terms "above" and "below," or "upper" and "lower," are used to locate places in reference to the center of the village, and do not refer to the river or the creek. The facts about the churches have been taken chiefly from Hurd's History of Otsego County. I cannot vouch for the truth of the legends and the stories.

It has been necessary, as well as interesting, to gather a great deal of the genealogy of the families of this town. This is at the disposal of any one desiring it. I wish to thank the many who have contributed to this history by word and

deed. I am especially indebted to W. J. Goddard. As a history the book is far from being complete, and of necessity contains errors. Any corrections, suggestions or new facts will be most gratefully received. If a greater desire to preserve family records and traditions is aroused, if a wider interest in local history is created, if a few facts have been rescued from oblivion, I shall feel well repaid, and the purpose of this little history will have been accomplished.

STUART B. BLAKELY

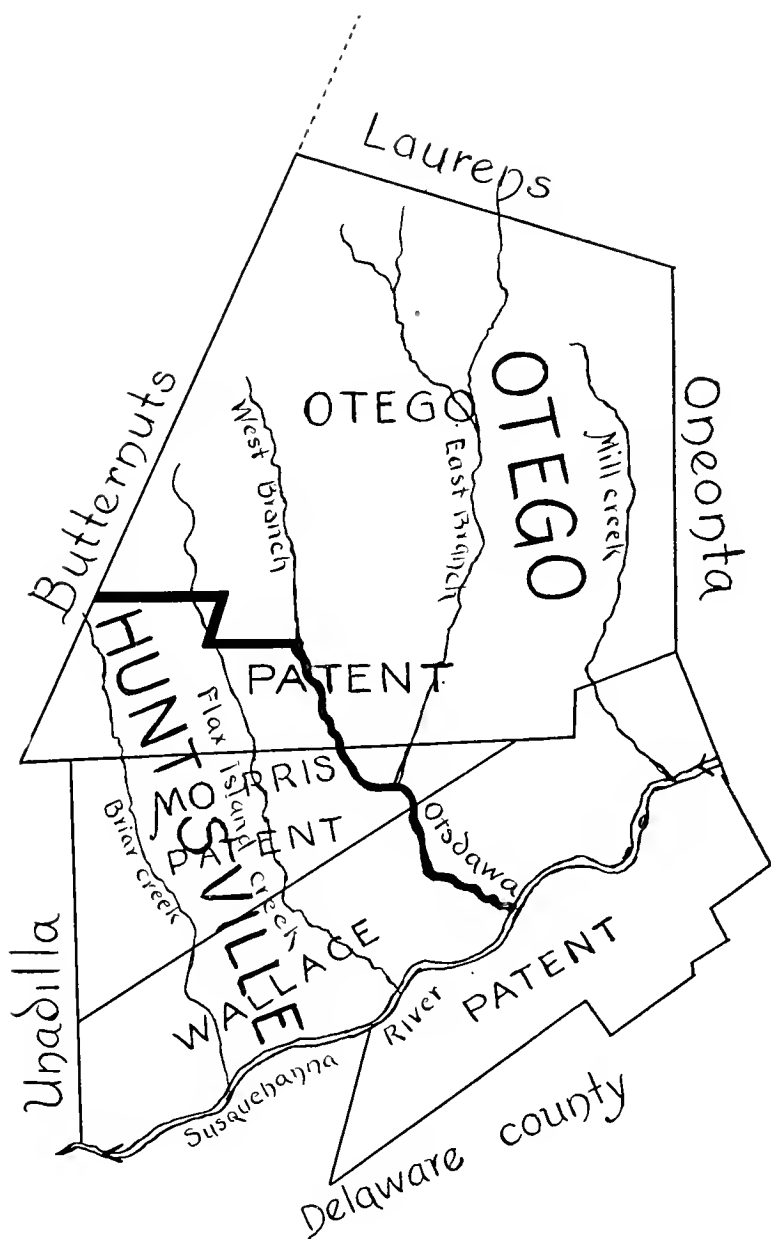
Otego, N. Y.

September 1, 1907.

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Map of Otego Township, showing Huntsville, a part of old Otego, and those portions of the three patents that lie within the town. About two miles to the inch.





## Description

The township of Otego comprises 26,634 acres on the southern border of Otsego county. It is bounded on the north by Laurens, on the east by Oneonta, on the south by Delaware county, on the west by Unadilla and Butternuts. The part north of the Susquehanna river is separated into ridges 200-400 feet high, which in general, are parallel with the creeks that empty into the river. The range of hills on the south side along the valley is unbroken. In 1770 the valley was described as a "beautiful country with fertile soil and well timbered; deer were as numerous as cattle on a thousand hills, and the river was alive with fish." In general the soil is a clay and sandy loam. The population, according to the census of 1905, was 1,708.

The village of Otego is situated on the Susquehanna river in latitude  $42^{\circ} 24'$  and in longitude  $75^{\circ} 11'$  at an elevation of about 1050 feet above the sea. It is a station on the railroad of the Delaware and Hudson Company, ninety miles from Albany and fifty-three miles from Binghamton. In 1800 it was a hemlock swamp with only one frame house in the vicinity; even twenty years later the children often amused themselves by jumping from bog to bog, from Main street to

the river. About 1835 the land south of Main street was overgrown with low bushes, white oaks and small pines, and through it there ran a path worn by children's feet on their way to the little red schoolhouse. A pipe was recently sunk one hundred thirty feet, and, after passing through the surface soil and a thin stratum of gravel, only quag was found. The village was incorporated 12 July 1892, and comprises six hundred forty acres. Its population on 15 September 1907 was about 613. It contains 180 houses, including hotels and stores.

# History of Otego

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## I

### Indian Occupation

THE early Indian history of this region is uncertain. By tradition the Delawares occupied the land; also the Tuscaroras, before they moved to the South. The Eskimos probably passed through the valley on their journey to the North. It is, however, certain that this region has always been occupied by Huronian, never by Algonquin peoples permanently, and that the original occupants of the valley were the Susquehanna Indians, called by the French Andastes. About 1675 they were driven south by a great people who had come from Lower Canada into possession of the territory. Called Iroquois by the French, the Five Nations by the English, Mengwe by the Delawares, and Ko-no-shi-o-ni or He-do-ne-sau-nee by themselves, these Indians were the "Romans of this hemisphere, and were a federation noted chiefly for the originality of their league, their victorious campaigns and their oratory." Their most warlike tribe was the Mohawk, a name that became a synonym of blood. The possession of Otego territory seems to have been in dispute, but probably belonged to the Oneidas, the last Mohawk village on the Susquehanna being the one at the mouth of the

Charlotte. But the Onondagas seem to have had some claim to the region, and it is possible that Otego and Otsdawa are both Onondaga names. The Iroquois overcame the Delawares in the latter part of the seventeenth century. In 1714 the Tuscaroras, returning from the South, joined the Five Nations, making the Six Nations. Through this region hunted Oneidas, Tuscaroras and subject Delawares. Campbell in his History of Oneonta says that this region was the scene of many sanguinary conflicts between different tribes that contended with each other for its possession.

The Iroquois lived in small and shifting villages, around which small clearings had usually been made. Frequently cornfields and in later days apple-orchards were planted. Their camps were "temporary and determined by fishing and hunting advantages," and were usually near springs and the mouths of creeks. There were many Indian houses on the Susquehanna in 1770, but in 1779 General Clinton destroyed the Indian civilization. For many years after the Revolution straggling friendly individuals and parties would erect their wigwams, often on the sites of their former villages, and remain a variable time, fishing, making baskets and trinkets, drying apples and looking for mineral landmarks. As late as 1830 some Indians camped at the head of the West Branch. The main Indian trails ran along both sides of the river, the one on the north side being the more used.

At the mouth of the Otsdawa was a camp on both sides of creek and river. Both historic and

prehistoric flints have been found just below William Van Name's, on the second terrace back from the river. Indian pottery and ovens have been found on the Day flats, and perfect pottery has been found near the village on the east bank of the Otsdawa. Just below the river road-bridge, on the south bank of the river, fragments of pottery have been picked up; on the other bank near the Borden ice-houses are clear evidences of Indian ovens, and a fine grainer has been found there. The rift just above this bridge is probably an old Indian weir where there was a shad-fishery. In 1800 there was an Indian encampment where Mrs. Mary A. Rathbun's house stands.

At the mouth of Flax Island creek a fire place has been found about one hundred fifty feet south of the creek on the north bank of the river. Two years ago a fire place was reported to be washed out of the south bank of the river, a little below the mouth of Briar creek.

Orlando Quackenbush reports that there used to be Indian dugouts in the south bank of the river just above the upper railroad bridge; and that on his flat bushels of clam-shells were found, and that there the Indians had a shad-fishery.

There was a camp down on what is known as the Peter Mickle place, near a large spring. It is said that there was another camp up in the woods near the old road, and still another just northeast on the old Sigsbee farm with an Indian orchard, where, it is claimed, was the last camping place of the red men in town. From this general locality there probably ran a trail along the ridge of higher land toward the river, which it crossed

a little way below Hale's Rocks; thence it passed up the Calder Hill ravine, where there is said to have been another camp, and on over the hill to the camp on the Otsdawa. The vicinity of these rocks is said to have been a favorite camping place of the Indians after the Revolution. In the bank, some distance above, was probably one of their burying-grounds. On these rocks, as late, as 1844, were some Indian paintings of warriors in two canoes.

Ninety years ago, east of the West Branch, on the farm of M. A. Edson, was a grove of spruce covering about three acres of flat land. In an opening within this grove were three rows of mounds, seven in a row, each mound being about twenty inches high and six feet long. It is supposed to be an Indian burying-ground. About twelve rods southeast was a spot, thirty feet square, of black mellow earth with a profusion of flint scales, and of broken, imperfect, and perfect arrow-heads. Such another spot is said to have been noticed in the bank near the river on the upper part of the Hale farm. On a knoll, east of the West Branch, on land now owned by R. G. Cornell, once stood an Indian house, about 8x10 feet, built of small pine logs notched together at the corners and with a split-timber floor. It was used as a Sunday meeting-house until the land was cleared when it was torn down. In his *Aboriginal Occupation of New York* Mr. Beauchamp marks a large camp two miles north of Otego, east of and near the creek. This was probably a winter camp, occupying about the location of the town water-works, a spot once covered with

hemlock. The Indians are said to have had a sugar-bush on the place settled by Samuel Green. On the hill west of Charles Terry's some timbers of an Indian house were once found between two rocks. There is said to have been a camp at Otsdawa.

The encampment of the Indian chieftain, Brant, was still standing with its poles, crotches and coverings within the limits of the present village of Otego, when the first settlers came in, according to Child's Directory of Otsego County. This may be true; but Brant certainly camped near the Otego creek, and it seems not reasonable that he should have had another camp so near. The "Bread Loaf," on land of Mrs. Ruth Newland in the village, on which was once growing a single poplar, can not be regarded as an Indian mound.

Indian arrow-heads and flint pieces have been found in great abundance on the slope in front of the Willow Vale School-house (No. 2), and near by is a fine spring. The locality seems to be a likely place for a camp. On Briar creek is the "Indian Oven," on land of Lester D. Gillett. There is said to have been a camp near a spring on the hill west of the Southard place, and another camp and a burying-ground by the creek near where Mrs. Elizabeth Waite recently lived.

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### The Indian village of Wauteghe

Wauteghe was a rather large village of good buildings near the mouth of the Otego creek. The main clearing, east of the creek, extended up the north bank of the river about one mile.

"The village embraced what was afterwards known as the VanWoert, Calkins and Stoughton Alger farms." In the later days of its existence an orchard was planted, and not many years ago some of the trees were still standing, the place being known as Indian Orchards. Dudley Campbell writes the word "Ahtigua" and says that there was an Indian mound in the vicinity. Sir William Johnson is reported to have rested in the village over night about 1750, and there to have had his dream by which he got his "Dreamland Tract" from old Chief Hendricks. The Indians had a burying-ground in Calkin's Grove, and the old cemetery now there is said to have been started at that place because it was where the red men made their graves. Seth Rowley, a Revolutionary soldier, said that when the grave of Henry Scramling was dug there, the skeleton of an Indian was found wrapped in elm bark with a banner-stone and arrow-heads. The village had been evacuated before 1753. It has been suggested that the Indians had left because they had sold the land to Sir William Johnson a few years before.

The village is frequently mentioned. Gideon Hawley, a missionary from Stockbridge, Mass., passed down the river to Oghquaga (now Windsor) in 1753. In his journal, under date of June 1, he says that his party arrived at "Wauteghe at which had been an Indian village where were a few fruit trees and considerable cleared land but no inhabitants."

No mention of the village is made in the Journals of the Sullivan Expedition, but one



writer speaks of "an Indian place called Otago."

The following is from the journal of Richard Wells, a surveyor of the Otego Patent—

"June 2, 1769. We landed and walked half a mile along the path to the old field, and from thence it is about half a mile to the mouth of Otego. This field has been formerly planted by the Indians with corn and apple trees. A few of the latter remain scattered about and are now in bloom and intermixed with aspens and other wild trees with raspberries and blackberries and there are quantities of strawberry vines in blossom. The soil is fit for the plough and tolerably level. Otego is here but narrow and fordable for horses; the Susquehanna may be about fifty yards over. W. Ridgeway saw yesterday Indians who had just taken two young beavers alive in the Otego." From this place his party went down the river, and the journal continues—"The path to Ohquhaga is very near the river mostly—we saw no creek of note this afternoon but were incommoded by Muscetoës."

In the survey of the Wallace patent in 1773 mention is made of the "apple trees in the Otego Indian field which stood near the Indian trail." On the map of Oneonta in the 1867 Atlas of Otsego County are shown, east of the Otego creek about midway between the railroad and the river, an Indian Orchard and a Cemetery, and on the south bank of the river, opposite, another "Old Indian Orchard."

## II

### Indian and Other Names in the Town and the Vicinity

THE Indian names of New York state are either Algonquin or Iroquois. The Indians gave names to localities from some characteristic of the region, or from some local event. These names were often trivial and as transient as Indian habitations. Frequently the same place was known by different names, and the same name might be applied to entirely different places. Seldom were Indian names the result of poetic inspiration. "Vale of Beauty," "Leafy Waters," and the like are but foolish interpretations that cling tenaciously. The surveyors and the early settlers took many of the native names, as they understood them, and applied them to specific places and streams, using sometimes a translation more often a corruption of them. Thus through the lapse of tongue and pen and time the certain meaning of many Indian names is lost forever.

The Indian names of immediate interest are Otego and Otsdawa, both Iroquois names. Some of the many variations in spelling, that occur in early maps, journals and land records, will be briefly noted. The Old New York Frontier by F. W. Halsey and Indian Names in New York by Rev. W. M. Beauchamp, as well as personal interviews with Mr. Beauchamp and Willard E. Yager of Oneonta, have been of great value in preparing the first part of this chapter.

OTEGO (Wauteghe; Atege on a map of 1826; Atega; Atiga; Adiga on a map of 1769; Odego; Otage; Otago; in the grant of the Otego patent Adige and Otago both occur.) This is a very old Indian name, and Wauteghe is probably the oldest known form. The term was first applied to the region about the mouth of the Otego creek, then to the Indian village there, then to the creek, then to the patent, then to the old town, and in 1830 to the present town.

Mr. Yager is of the opinion that the most probable meaning of the word is "place of the butternut," or "place of the sugar-maple." The Indians were very partial to naming localities from trees and plants, and these trees, especially the butternut, were thick in the Otego valley. (Oo-ha-wa-ta, butternut tree; Ho-wa-ta, sugar-maple; a-ga, place of) These words are Onondaga, but the other tribes had forms much like them. Two variations of the term seem to exist, Wauteghe and all other known forms. By supposing that the original form of the word from which Otego has been derived, was a compound of one of the above nouns with the suffix a-ga, forming something like "Oo-wa-t(a)-a-ga," it would be possible to derive all the forms known to-day.

Mr. Beauchamp holds that Otego is derived from the form A-te-gen, which means "to have a fire there," meaning a campfire or something more. He explains the form Wauteghe by the fact that the Iroquois often prefixed letters or syllables to their words, varying but not materially changing their meaning. If this be the true

rendering of the word, it illustrates the often trivial origin of Indian names.

Another explanation suggested by Mr. Yager is that Otego may be derived from Wau, mountains or hills, and a-ga, place of. The region about the mouth of the Otego creek is one of the few places along the river where the hills come close to the water. But this rendering is very improbable, for, among other reasons, Wau is an Algonquin word.

The statement that Otego means "pleasant valley" is of no value. Some wag has said that Otego is derived from the saying of a mythical Indian chief, who grieved to leave this beautiful region, saying over and over again, "O, to go." The fanciful legends of the origin of Otego and Otsdawa may be found in Chapter XVII.

OTSDAWA (Ockwada and Otsdawada in a conveyance of 1816; Osdawaw, Odsdawaw, Otsdawaw, etc.) This has been rendered "red stone." The soil up and down this stream is distinctly of this color, and there is red shale back on the hills.

Mr. Beauchamp thinks that Otsdawa is derived from the Mohawk word Ots-te-a-ra (Os-ten-ra), rock. If this be the true meaning, in all probability the name refers to the region of Hale's Rocks, on which were the Indian paintings. He suggests that another possible derivation is from Ots-ta, fish scale.

Mr. Yager says that Otsdawa is derived from Ots-ka-wa, big or tall hemp. A century and more ago below the mouth of Flax Island creek

and in "Stillwater" was an island, which has long since disappeared, where grew wild flax or hemp. This was a necessity to the Indians, who called the locality the place of the "big hemp." The white man, roughly translating the Indian name, applied it to the stream near by, and, corrupting it to Otsdawa, applied this term to the creek farther east that bears it now.

Otsdawa has been said to be a corruption of the word Ottawa, which is translated "traders."

The following are of more or less interest:

Mohawk—bear, or man eater.

Oneida—stone, or people of the stone, a standing stone being the tribe's symbol.

Susquehanna—an Algonquin word and variously translated—river of long reaches, crooked river, muddy stream, smooth river, possibly a corruption of the Latin Sequana. The Iroquois, who owned the stream in historic times, called it by another name which meant "The River of Great Islands." The river was also known to the Indians as the "River of Nice Sand."

Otsego (Otsego in a record of 1754; Ostenha; Assega; Otesaga)—clear deep water; or refers to the Council Rock at the foot of the lake; or, most probably, refers to the origin of the Susquehanna there.

Unadilla (many forms of this word exist)—pleasant valley; or place of meeting; or, best, where the stream forks.

Oneonta (Onoyarenton)—place of the stone; or, better, where the rocks crop out. A very improbable origin is from Ononta, hill or mountain.

The following are some other names, not of Indian origin, occurring in the town and the vicinity:

Hamburg (h)—the name given early in the last century to the hamlet in the eastern part of the then town of Unadilla, which afterward became Huntsville and is now Otego village. It is said to have been suggested by T. R. Austin. Huntsville was so called in honor of Ransom Hunt, a prominent pioneer, who did much to advance the interests of the little settlement. First, Hamburg, and then, Huntsville clung for a long time as village names. River street was once nicknamed Pickle street, from the fact that two of its residents, Dr. Benedict and Benjamin Corey, had their jugs frequently filled to make, as they claimed, a favorite "pickle." Church street, once known as Chestnut street, was, but a comparatively few years ago, a little lane running down to the Episcopal church. L. A. Beagle's house was the first one built on this street. Other names of Follett street have been New street and Cross street.

In 1800 Briar creek was known as Wheaton creek. It was soon changed to Potter's creek after Robert Potter, "one of the earliest settlers, a big man and a great worker." In 1810 a high wind blew down nearly every tree on over one hundred acres near its head. The spot was soon covered with blackberry briars. This circumstance and the fact that many briars were allowed to grow along the fences gave it the name of Briar creek. In 1854 the Center Brook post-office was established, John W. Pearce suggest-

ing the name, and the creek gradually became known as Center Brook. The name was not popular. When the postoffice was discontinued, Briar creek came into use again. The older term is still heard in the expression, Center Brook church. Center Brook was midway between Sand Hill creek and Flax Island creek.

Willow Vale is a wide district on the north side of the river about the mouth of Briar creek. Here is the Dodge or Willow Vale Schoolhouse. The name is said to have been suggested by William Trask, from the great willows set out along the creek's bank to confine it. Wheaton creek is a tributary of Briar creek, that enters just below Carl Smith's. It was named from Ben Wheaton. The Rhode Island Settlement included the Potters, the Merithews and other families. East of schoolhouse No. 4 is Emmons or Wheaton Hill. About the head of the creek, lying largely in the town of Butternuts, was Puckerhuddle (Puggyhuddle; Tuggyhuddle). Its origin is unknown. The name is said to have been suggested by David S. Hurd. Here lived the Whitneys, the Canfields, Peter Farnum, Horatio Merrick, Darius Niles and others. Bull Dog was a former name of Gilbertsville, and Frog Harbor was a locality near by.

Flax Island creek in all probability was named from a small well known island in the river below its mouth where the wild flax grew in abundance. In the resurvey of the Wallace patent in 1773 this island is called Flax Island. In a deed of 1807 it is called this, and also Vrooman's Island. It is entirely possible that

at some time flax has been raised on some island in this creek. See Otsdawa above.

Shepherds Corners was formerly alluded to as Federal Hook. It was prematurely laid out into city lots, and vied with the old town. It then waned; but in 1884 was picking up again, when the name of Burdicks Corners was suggested. Many Shepherds lived here. Royal Shepherd kept for many years a hotel where M. R. Bourne lives. The neighborhood of schoolhouse No. 10 near the head of Flax Island was known as Hampshire village before 1820. Here lived the families of Marr, Woodward, Day, Persons and Barker, all from New Hampshire. There is said to have been another locality on Flax Island creek known as Humphreyville, but no trace of it can be found.

The vicinity of the junction of the east and the west branches of the Otsdawa was early called the Bundy Settlement. Weaver Street was originally that portion of the West Branch road where the Weavers lived. It was eventually applied to the entire West Branch. The name has disappeared. In 1824 the junction of the upper cross-road to Flax Island creek with the West Branch road was known as Brown's Settlement or Schoolhouse. On the East Branch: Old Peak was a little-used term applied to the hill east of the old Martin farm. Green Street is the locality about schoolhouse No. 15, where the Greens settled. The term was never so inclusive as Weaver Street, and is preserved in "Green Street Schoolhouse." East of this schoolhouse is Beetle Hill, of which two derivations are pos-



sible: one, from a family of Bedell, who may have lived here; the other, the more probable, from the fact that some one once made beetles on the hill. "Dog Island" was a little huddle of squatters' log huts near the creek, largely on the present Merithew farm. Goatsville was the former title of Otsdawa hamlet, and was so named from the fact that Phineas Cook, who once owned all the land where the hamlet stands, kept a large stock of cattle, sheep and goats.

Calder Hill was named from Godfrey Calder.

Mill creek was called Scrambling's mill creek as early as 1800. A road survey of 1801 speaks of "the Pine Plain below Robt. E. Winn's, south of Mill Creek." Slab City, or Canfield's Corners, was the name of the little huddle of houses at the foot of the old Mill creek road, near S. S. Crandall's. A later name was Kansas Corners, or "Bleeding Kansas." This was the old "Corner," and was once quite flourishing. Here "Jose" Wiles had a blacksmith shop and David Canfield, a grocery store. In the river, opposite, is Bird's Eddy; near by is Horton's "Slang" or Slank. Arabia was a term applied to school district No. 9, probably because many of the settlers there came from the vicinity of Stone Arabia on the Mohawk. The locality of this schoolhouse was called first the Thayer, then the Perry Settlement. This was in Green Valley, or "Hell Hollow."

On the south side of the river: back of Northup's house, is Dumpling Hill, so called from its shape. To the east is Chamberlain Hill. Stony Brook, known by this name as early

as 1815, is a small stream that flows into the river between the Blakely and the old Sigsbee farms. It has falls about twenty feet in height. Opposite the Village is Franklin Mountain. Still-water is a wide and "still" place in the river, opposite Shepherds Corners. Here was old Flax Island. Tight Nipping extended from the Houghton farm to Wells Bridge, and was so named from the fact that the settlers here were poor and had a "Hard Scrabble" to get along. The name is said to have been bestowed by Milton Merwin on his return from a whale-fishing trip.

### III

#### The Organization of the Township

THE land embraced by the present township of Otego has been successively part of

The wilderness of the Province of New York;

Albany county, one of the two original counties of the state, formed in 1683;

Tryon county, named in honor of Sir William Tryon, the Provincial Governor, formed from the western part of Albany county in 1772. Otego was in the Canajoharie district, one of the five into which the county was divided. On 12 April 1784 Tryon county was changed to Montgomery county;

Montgomery county, named in honor of General Richard Montgomery, who fell at Quebec;

Otsego county, set off from the southern part of the last named county 16 February 1791, containing two townships already formed, Otsego and Cherry Valley. The county when first formed had as western and southern boundaries the Unadilla and Delaware rivers; but in 1797 Delaware county was formed from Ulster and Otsego counties with the Susquehanna river as its northern boundary. The part of Delaware county lying along this river was so inaccessible to the rest of the county that in 1822, when Huntsville was formed, the tier of lots on the south side of the river was added to Otsego county. The law added farther east than the limits of Huntsville.

The following shows the steps in the formation of the present Otego from preformed townships:

The township of Otsego was formed in Montgomery county 7 March 1788.

Unadilla was taken from Otsego 10 March 1792.

"Old Otego" was taken from Unadilla 5 February 1796.

Huntsville was formed 12 April 1822 from the eastern part of Unadilla and the above mentioned tier of lots taken at that time from Delaware county; its boundaries were the same as those of the present town of Otego, except that its east line was the west line of Old Otego.

The present township of Otego was formed 17 April 1830 from Huntsville and the western part of old Otego.

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### Old Otego

The old town of Otego was formed from the eastern part of the town of Unadilla 5 February 1796. Its boundaries were roughly as follows: on the north, the north line of the present town of Laurens; on the east, a line running generally northeast through a point about three-quarters of a mile east of "Shadyside" in the present town of Oneonta; on the south, the Susquehanna river; on the west, a line that, beginning at the mouth of the Otsdawa, followed that stream up to the junction of the two branches, thence up the west branch about one mile, thence nearly west to the Flax Island creek, thence northeast about the same distance to the southeast corner of Lot No. 17, Otego patent, thence nearly west to the

town line near the Center Brook church, thence northeast to the north line of the town of Laurens, following the west line of Otego and Laurens.

The records of Old Otego are in the Town Clerk's office at Oneonta, and the minutes of the first town meeting are as follows:

"The first Town Meeting agreeable to appointment of the Legislature was held at Trumon Harrison's, April ye 5th., 1796:

When the following officers were elected—viz:

1st. Butler Gilbert—Supor.

2nd. Jacob Butts—T. Clk.

3rd. Zar Benedict

Samuel Cook

Jonathan Tickner

4th. Jonathan Johnson

Ezra Barton.

George Scramling

5th. Job Straight

Samuel Sleeper

6th. Jacob Butts

Griffin Craft

Levy Jenks

7th. Aaron Harrington

Samuel Green

Nathaniel Spencer

8th. Wm. Draper—Collector

Bondsmen: Charles Eldred, Sam. Cook,

Stoton Alger, Job Straight

9th. Ezra Barton—Pound Keeper

10th. Perry G. Ellsworth

Joseph H. Sleeper

Ebenezer Rice

} Assessors.

} Com. Hways.

} Poor Masters.

} Coms. of Schools

} Constables.

} Fence Viewers

Twenty-one Path Masters were elected.

Voted that Hogs should be confined, and not run at large.

Voted this town would give five Pounds for every grown Wolf's scalp.

Also voted that each Pathmaster make a return of each man's real and Personal estate with their names—and nominate an overseer for the ensuing year at the Town meeting for 1797."

At a town meeting held 1 March, 1808 "Voted that \$5.00 be raised for the purpose of erecting stocks in this town."

Laurens was formed from the northern part of the town in 1810. The Legislature was petitioned to form a new town from the southern part of Milford and the eastern part of Old Otego, to be called Oneonta. The western part of Old Otego objected, and sent two men to Albany to oppose the measure. A compromise was made by which the western part was annexed to the small town of Huntsville, and this new town was called Otego. Thus in 1830 were formed the present towns of Oneonta and Otego.

In 1813 Old Otego is described as follows: "Otego—a Post township of Otsego County, 20 miles southwest of Cooperstown and 86 a little southwest of Albany, bounded North by Laurens, East by Milford, Southeast by the Susquehanna River or the County of Delaware, West by Unadilla and Butternuts. Along the Susquehanna River are extensive and fertile flats. The remaining part is broken and hilly, though its valleys are rich and together with the arable hills, and meadow and grazing lands, afford a good proportion of farming lands. Otego Creek, a

small but good mill stream that rises in Exeter, runs south across the east part to the Susquehanna River; this is sometimes though erroneously spelled Atega; its course may be near 28 miles. There are some other smaller streams. Rafts and boats descend the Susquehanna to Baltimore, and there are fine groves of timber. There are two grain mills, four saw mills, and two fulling mills. In 1810 the population of Otego which included that also of the present town of Laurens was 2512 with 216 electors, 348 taxable inhabitants, and 216,647 dollars of taxable property. My correspondents compute the present population exclusive of Laurens at 1000, and that of Laurens 1512. A turnpike from Albany to Oxford and the West leads across this town, and it has other roads."

According to Harvey Baker Old Otego had in 1820 1416 inhabitants, 286 electors, 366 farmers, 47 mechanics, one slave, 10 schools, 9,409 acres of improved land, 1,646 cattle, 276 horses, 4,454 sheep, one grist mill, 9 saw mills, one fulling mill, one carding-machine, one iron-works, and made 14,983 yards of domestic cloth.

The records of Old Otego show that in September 1822 a detailed school report was made, which showed that there were 414 children between the ages of five and fifteen years. The commissioners reported that the books most in use in the common schools were—

Spelling books—Webster's and Columbian.

Arithmetics—Pike's and Daboll's.

Geographies—Murry's and Webster's.

Dictionaries—Walker's and Perry's.

## IV

### The Period Before the Revolution

HALSEY says that two Dutchmen passed down the Susquehanna in 1614 or 1615, and that in 1616 the headwaters of the river were visited by Stephen Bruehle. During the Dutch and the early English rule many traders and others came into the valley. Between 1720 and 1730 three or four companies of German Palatinates passed down the river into Pennsylvania. The valley was soon recognized and used as an important highway. Sir William Johnson began to wield his influence. After the first explorers came the representatives of the Church, first the Jesuits, then the men of the Church of England, and finally the missionaries from New England. Prominent among the last was Gideon Hawley.

In 1683 the Susquehanna territory above Wyalusing, Pa. was conveyed by the Indians to the English. Thus was thwarted the ambition of William Penn, whose agents were negotiating for the territory. In May 1751 Sir "William Johnson and Company" had some correspondence with Gouldsbrow Banyar, Secretary of the Province of New York, concerning a tract of 100,000 acres on both sides of the Susquehanna, from the Charlotte to the Pennsylvania line, extending one mile back from the river on each side. Within a few months the Company purchased the tract from the Indians for about \$1500, and it is said that a patent for the same was granted them the



same year. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix was signed in 1768, fixing the boundary between the Indians and the English. The line crossed the Susquehanna at its confluence with the Unadilla. By the terms of the treaty all the land west of this line was Indian property. On 21 March 1770 Sir William Johnson and his associates set forth that they had petitioned for 100,000 acres from the Charlotte to the line of the Pennsylvania Grant or Patent; that they had purchased this tract from the Indians; that they now (after the Fort Stanwix treaty) desired only a part of this tract; and that they prayed for not over 54,000 acres in two or more patents. On 8 May 1770 a grant of 26,000 acres along the Charlotte was made to Sir William Johnson and some of his associates. The rest of the 54,000 acres was granted on 16 June 1770 to twenty-eight other associates of Johnson in a separate patent. This was what has been known as the Wallace patent.

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### The Patents

The township of Otego comprises parts of three patents of land that were granted by the Crown—the Morris, the Wallace and the Otego patents.

The Morris patent, dated 1768, was granted to Staats Long Morris, a British officer, who afterwards became governor of Quebec. In 1785 the State was appealed to for a new grant to other members of the family, and this was issued the following year.

The Wallace patent, granted as described above, comprised 28,000 acres along the Susquehanna between the mouth of the Charlotte and the mouth of the Unadilla, extending one mile back from the river on each side. At the head of the list of patentees was the name of Alexander Wallace. He and his brother Hugh were prominent merchants in New York, and uncompromising Tories. The name of Hugh Wallace does not appear in this list. It is, however, probable that he was "the real Wallace at first interested, and that another interested person and eventually the sole one, was Gouldsbrow Banyar," who became one of New York state's greatest land holders

Greed for land had become so great that one thousand acres was the limit that one man might receive from the Crown. "Accommodating friends acted as fictitious owners, and promptly made over to the real persons in interest the titles granted in their names." This was probably the method used in the case of the Wallace patent. On 7 July, following the granting of the patent, fourteen of the original patentees conveyed by deeds to Gouldsbrow Banyar, each his share, amounting to 14,000 acres. Within the next four years Hugh Wallace and Gouldsbrow Banyar, neither of whose names appears in the original list of patentees, sold to four persons over 2000 acres from the patent. 1779 the Wallaces with many others "were attainted of treason, their estates were to be confiscated and they proscribed." Gouldsbrow Banyar narrowly escaped their fate. The half of the patent owned by Hugh Wallace reverted to the State, from which it was later

bought by Henry Livingston and Abraham Lansing. On 11 September 1787 these two owners and Banyar, owner of the other half, came to a division of lots, and the latter received as his share about 16,350 acres.

The patent was surveyed in 1770 by Alexander Colden, and again in 1773 by William Cockburn and John Wigram. No land was sold from the patent during the Revolution. After the war some lots were sold outright; others were leased for a term of years at a rent of a certain number of bushels of wheat per annum. Many of the old lines between the lots are yet marked, in whole or in part, by fences, running from the river on each side.

The patent has been known by other names than the Wallace patent. It was commonly called the Sir William Johnson Tract. In 1801 it is called a "tract of land patented to Gouldsbrow Banyar and others." In 1815 it is spoken of as "Johnson's Mile on the river." In a deed of 1830 it is called the "patent granted to Wallace, Johnson and others."

There is a tract of 1000 acres in the Wallace patent about the mouth of the Otego creek, about which there has been much speculation. It belonged to Sir William Johnson before his death in 1774. It was called his "Dreamland Tract," tradition saying that it had been given him, because of a dream that he had, by King Hendricks of the Mohawks. The author has made a special effort to trace the early history of this piece of land, but has been only partially successful. It was sold by Hugh Wallace and Goulds-

brow Banyar to Sir William Johnson between 1770 and 1773. The reason why Johnson desired and bought this bit of land at this place is obscure, but would be the most interesting thing about it. On 5 March 1776 it was conveyed by John Johnson, son of Sir William, to George Scramling and Adam Young. The late Allen Scramling told the author that this tract of 1000 acres, 800 of which was on the north side and 200 on the south side of the river, all finally came into the Scramling family, and was possessed by the three brothers as follows: What is known as the John Van Woert place and the west 100 acres on the south side of the river were owned by David; the land west of this place and also north on the Otego creek was owned by Henry, the west line of his holdings being the west line of what is known as the Nelson Cole place; what is known as the Peter Van Woert farm, where Roberts and Tyler live, and the other 100 acres on the south side of the river were owned by George. The later history of the tract is very complex.

The Otego patent of 69,000 acres was issued 3 February 1770 to Charles Reade, Thomas Wharton and sixty-seven others. It comprised what is now the town of Laurens, the greater portions of the towns of Milford, Oneonta and Otego and a small part of the town of Morris. It was surveyed by Richard Smith and Richard Wells in 1779, and in this year with Joseph Brant as guide they made a tour of the Susquehanna valley. Smith, who was a frequent visitor to the Otego valley, was a patentee for 4000

acres of this patent on both sides of the Otsdawa a few miles above its mouth. The patent has also been called the Otsego patent; it was sometimes spoken of as the Burlington Township or Company, being composed of prominent men of Philadelphia and Burlington. The following has been extracted and condensed from the original Letters Patent—"George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith and so forth, To all to whom these Presents shall come Greeting. Whereas our loving subjects William Trent, Charles Reade, Thomas Wharton Senior and ninety-seven other Persons" \* \* \* presented a petition to "Sir Henry Moore Baronet, then our Captain General and Governor in Chief of our Province of New York and read in our Council for our said Province" in March 1769. They said that in October 1768, before the Fort Stanwix treaty, they had at their "sole expense procured the Indian proprietors hereof" to convey to them all their right and title "to the land lying in the County of Albany in the Province of New York and in the Indian deed for the said lands described as follows, that is to say: Beginning at the South East corner of Hartwick Patent or Tract of land, on the West side of the River Susquehanna, thence down the said River Susquehanna according to the several courses thereof to the mouth of Adiga or Otago Creek; thence Westerly eight miles; thence Northerly to the South West corner of a tract of land lately purchased of the Indians by George Croghan Esquire and others; thence along the line of the said Croghan's tract

to the South West corner of Hartwick Patent or Tract; thence Easterly along the line of the said Hartwick's Patent or Tract to the place of beginning on the River Susquehanna, containing by estimation one hundred thousand acres, be the same more or less." "The Petitioners and their associates were desirous to cultivate and improve the Tract so purchased," and wanted a patent. The tract that could be patented was found to contain only 69,000 acres, with the usual highways allowed, and sixty-nine of the original petitioners then "prayed" for that amount. William Trent was absent at that time in England, and was not among them. Each was granted 1000 acres, more or less, over which he was to have complete control; but "all mines of Gold and Silver and also all white or other sorts of Pine Trees fit for Masts of the growth of twenty-four inches diameter and upwards at twelve inches from the Earth for Masts in the Royal Navy" were reserved. The rent was to be paid every year forever to the Crown at the Custom House in New York to the Collector or Receiver "on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary commonly called Lady Day." The yearly rent was two shillings and six pence sterling for each and every hundred acres of the above granted lands, and so in proportion for any lesser quantity thereof, excepting such as was allowed for highways. Within three years the tract must be so settled that "it should amount to one family for every thousand acres, and within that time at least three acres for every fifty that are capable of cultivation must be planted and effectually." The land re-

verted to the Crown if the terms of the patent were not complied with. \* \* \* “Witness our said trusty and well beloved Cadwallader Colden Esquire, our said Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of our said Province of New York, and the Territories depending thereon in America, at our Fort in our City of New York the Third day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy and in our Reign the Tenth.”

## V

### Otego During the Revolution

DURING the Revolution the Susquehanna was a noted thoroughfare. In this period the chief events were a few of the causes that led to the Sullivan Expedition and the passage of Clinton's army down the river.

Colonel John Harper with a regiment of militia went down the Susquehanna on the ice in the winter of 1776-7. Early in the summer of 1777 Joseph Brant arrived at Unadilla, and drove the settlers from the valley. General Nicholas Herkimer with about 380 men passed down the river in June of this year, and in July held conference with Brant near Sidney. This is said to be the last time that the Iroquois were ever met in council as a nation. Two members of Herkimer's expedition were Henry Scramling, 2nd Lieut. 1st. Battalion, and Daniel Ogden, 2nd. Lieut. 5th. Battalion. The expedition was not successful. Unadilla was burned by Butler's army; and on 11 November 1778 occurred the massacre at Cherry Valley, the Indians passing up and down the river on their terrible mission. Then came the Sullivan Expedition. General James Clinton dammed the Susquehanna at the lake, and, on the swell caused by breaking the dam, passed down the river. It is said that the sudden rising of the water in the summer filled the Indians with superstitious fear. General Clinton left the lake 9 August 1779 with about



1800 men and 220 boats. The soldiers marched along the river bank, while invalids, baggage and provisions were carried in the boats. The following are some extracts taken from those Journals of the Sullivan Expedition that refer to this vicinity—

Journal of Lieut. Erkuries Beatty:

Wensday, 11th.—Today we crossed a large creek, called Otego, and passed several old Indian encampments where they had encamped when they were going to destroy Cherry Valley or returning likewise we passed one of their encampments yesterday. We encamped tonight at Ogden's farm and a very bad encamping ground.

Thursday, 12th.—March'd of this morning 7 o'clock, had the advanced guard today proceeded down the West side of the river as usual.

Journal of Lieut. William McKendry:

Aug. 11.—Embarked 7 o'clock A. M. proceeded without much trouble as far as Ogden's farm and encamped on the right of the River—25 Miles by water and 15 by land this day. The land very fine at this place. The land in general by the sides of this River when one side is good the other is barren. The Gen'l. ordered each officer one Quart of Rum and one gill to each other man. (He figures that when they reached Ogden's farm they had come 63 miles by water and 36 by land.)

Journal of Rudolphus Van Hovenburgh:

Valkenburgh Place August 11—Decamped & Loaded our Baggage and proceeded on our March as far as two miles below an Indian place called Otago which was computed to be twenty miles.

Sisquahanna River, Otago, August 12—We decamped at about five in the morning and proceeded on our march as far as Unedelly.

On leaving Ogden's farm (the place settled by Daniel(?) Ogden, which is now occupied by Hiram Northup) it was ordered "that the boats be started three abreast and the whole at a close distance, the river having become broad enough to admit doing so." Clinton joined General Sullivan's forces at Tioga Point.

No survey was made of the Clinton route, but it is shown on a map made in 1778 by Captain William Gray of the 4th. Pa. Reg't. Part of the Susquehanna is shown on this map, and flowing into it from the east are marked the Charlotte and the Aleout, and between these the "Middle Creek." It is probable that the "Middle Creek" is the Otego, and that Captain Gray made a mistake when he drew it entering the river from the east. A path along the north bank of the river is also indicated.

In October 1780 Sir John Johnson with 800 men passed up the river to destroy the fort and settlement at Schoharie. They were foiled in their attempt by the watchfulness of Timothy Murphy.

The passage of Clinton's army and the work of the Sullivan Expedition made the valley forever safe from Indian attack; but the little settlements on the upper Susquehanna perished in the struggle of war. The Indians, in good faith allies of the English, lost their homes forever.

## VI

### Settlement

BEFORE the Revolution the only settlers of whom there is any record were the Ogdens. W. V. Huntington, who furnished the historical data for the 1903 Atlas of Otsego County, told the author that in about the year 1778 S. Allen built a house on the cross road above Otsdawa and lived there with his son Eastwood. Running short of provisions the father left his son alone in the wilderness and started on foot for food. He found his son safe on his return, but soon removed to New Jersey. There he staid till the close of the war, when he returned to the Otego valley. The approximate site of his house is given as about half a mile north of the Perry schoolhouse (No. 9) on Mill creek. It is, however, more probable that it was near where Frank Garner lives.

At the close of the war there was not a settler in the Wallace patent. Adam Kalden built a log house near the center of the present village of Otego in 1783, according to Child's Directory. About 1787 the tide of immigration began to come in. The first settlements were along the river and on its south side. It is to be marked that the first settlers were of Dutch and German extraction from Albany and Schoharie counties and the Mohawk valley. Among them are found such names as Winn, Mericle, Scramling,

Calder, Snouse, Wiles, Vanderweriker, Hess, Overhuyser, Quackenboss, Bovie, Brimmer and Youmans. These settlers took possession of the fertile river land because they came first and because they were at home only on low land along the water. A story by the late Allen Scramling may partially explain. "The Devil once took the New Englander up on a high hill overlooking all this region, and offered him the the river land if he would serve him, the Devil, as master. The New Englander refused. The same offer on the same conditions was made to the "Dutchman," who, after a moment's consideration, is reported to have said, 'Py Gott, I vill do it.' " But the men from the East of English and Scotch-Irish decent were not slow to come, and the creeks were soon settled; for the land was just as cheap, if not cheaper, and in addition the early settler believed that the better timber showed better soil.

The early settlers were a motley crew—patriots, Tories, pirates, refugees, and the early population, was constantly changing. Many were squatters who took what they liked, and moved when and whither they pleased—but their pleasure often coincided with compulsion. As late as 1828 the settlers on the Lawrence and the Banyar estates were notified that they must buy the land that they had improved, or vacate. Many were unable to pay, and were forced to lose the labor of years. Some gained. One man bought one hundred thirty-five acres, and routed out six tenants, all of whom had pretty well cleared the land. To show their disrespect for

Banyar a song was composed, one verse of which was as follows—

“Now to the West we will repair  
And wash our face in sweat and tears,  
With savages to take our fare,  
With catamount, hedgehog and bear,  
More human far than Banyar.”

Indeed many did go West for this reason, or because the timber was becoming scarce, or because they had become unpopular members of the community. Thus have many of the early names disappeared from the town. But it is remarkable how many men still live on the land that their ancestors settled and cleared, in some cases over a hundred years ago.

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### The Ogdens

The Ogdens were of English origin, and came to Otego in 1774 or 1775. The author has made a special effort to secure fuller information about these settlers, but has been unable to do so. There are said to have been three brothers, and their names were probably—Daniel, who settled the place now occupied by Hiram Northup; David, who settled in a little log house on what is known as the Sigbee farm; John, who is mentioned in all lists of Revolutionary soldiers of Otego, and who, for some reason, ran away over a hundred years ago.

There was a Richard Ogden; but he seems to have settled in the Otego valley. It is, however, probable that only one of the brothers settled here at the above date, and that he returned with the others after the Revolution. This brother, probably Daniel, had a son named David, whose experiences are related below. Halsey says that the Ogdens were well known to Brant before the war, and that Brant was familiar with their Otego home.

The following is a synopsis of "A True Narrative of the Capture of David Ogden among the Indians in the time of the Revolution"—

David Ogden was born in Fishkill, Dutchess county of American parents in 1764. When he was a mere child, the family removed to Waterford, Saratoga county, and thence to the wild regions of the Susquehanna, to a place eighteen miles below Colliers, a noted location in new country times. Here the family remained two years, when the war broke out.

Brant was at Unadilla, and sent word to Ogden's father that, if he did not immediately join him against the rebels, he would take his oxen, cow, etc., and make him and his family prisoners. An Indian, called "Yaup" (probably a corruption of Jacob) because he could talk "Dutch," whom Ogden had befriended, traveled all night up the river to warn Ogden of his danger and immediately returned, having told Brant that he was going on a hunt. The family packed their clothing and bedding in a canoe, which David, then twelve years old, and his father paddled up the river. The mother and a

younger brother drove the oxen and their only cow along the Indian trail on shore. In two days they all arrived at the foot of the lake where they camped. On the third day after leaving home the mother waded the river and struck off over the hill east of Cooperstown, while the rest started up the lake in the canoe. The family camped at Newtown Martin (now Middlefield) for two days. They remained three days at the log house of Daniel McCollom, three miles distant; and in another deserted house near by they remained a season. In November 1778, on the receipt of alarming news from Unadilla, they went to Cherry Valley, arriving in the night, where Colonel Campbell gave them his kitchen for shelter. After being here a few days the father went back to Newtown Martin on a scouting expedition. While he was gone, the alarm came to Cherry Valley. The mother fled with her four small children through the snow and rain to the Mohawk, where she was later joined by her husband. All the family escaped the massacre.

The next spring David, then fourteen years old, volunteered in the Revolution, his father at about the same time being orderly sergeant. His first two enlistments were for three and then nine months; but before their expiration, he had enlisted for all the war. The records show that he was mustered in in September 1780. He saw Major Andre hanged in that year, and wintered in Fort Stanwix. On 2 March 1781 he was taken prisoner by the Indians and Tories under Brant, who, on being told that one of the prisoners was David Ogden, said,

“What, the son of the old beaver hunter, that old scouter; ugh, I wish it was him instead of you, but we will take care of his boy or he may be a scouter too.” The prisoners were led through the wilderness, suffering much hardship, to Fort Niagara. Soon after their arrival David was adopted by an old squaw named Gun-na-go-let, who gave him the name of Chee-chee-la-coo, chipping bird. After being in captivity for about two years he was taken to Oswego, where he became acquainted with a certain Danforth who had been taken at Cherry Valley. The two finally managed to escape together and reached Fort Herkimer. Thence David went to Fort Plain, and finally to where his parents lived in Schoharie county, at a place called Warrensbush. He was scarcely eighteen years old, and had been two years and about four months in absolute slavery. He enlisted in the war of 1812, and saw Captain Elisha Saunders fall in the Battle of Queens-town. The engagement lasted twelve hours. Ogden was in the thickest of the fight, two bullets passing through his clothing. Forty of his company were either killed or wounded.

This David Ogden settled at Treadwell where the above sketch was written by him some time before his death on 30 October 1840. He had a son, David, and grandsons, Chauncey, Linus and Ira.



## VII

### The South Side of the River

THE place now owned and occupied by Orlando Quackenbush was settled by Ebenezer Rice from the Mohawk, who had cleared fifteen acres here before 1807. He moved to Ohio, but later returned to live on the Otsdawa. Before 1819 Isaac Quackenbush, grandfather of the present owner, of Dutch descent from Albany county, occupied the farm, living first in a log cabin near the river. The old soldier later had built for himself the little frame house which is now joined to the present dwelling. Jacob was one of his seven children. The old saw mill on the place was built by George D. Scramling.

The first settler on the place of the late Stephen Northup, son of Robert, now occupied by his widow, Lucinda, and two of his sons, was Gilbert Smith, who was here before 1793. John Brimmer from Rensselaer county bought the place from Stephen Andrews in 1797. Brimmer's first house was of logs and stood a little west of the frame house that he later built north of the road and in which Caroline Northup lived. At his death Brimmer owned also the greater part of the Hurlbut farm. His daughter Hannah, who had married Robert Northup, inherited his original farm; his son Aaron came into possession of the latter place and built the present house where he lived until he sold to Harmon B. Hurlbut.

The first settler on the place owned and occu-

pied by Burdette Hurlbut, grandson of Harmon B., was William French, who came from Massachusetts at about the same time as Henry Shepherd—possibly the year before. He was living here as late as 1801. A century ago this place was largely owned by Elisha Shepherd and Wheeler French. In 1815 Cornelius Mericle from Schoharie county bought ninety acres of this place near the river. Many years ago revival meetings were held in his barn, and many were baptized at the head of the smaller island, opposite the stone house. The whole farm later came into the hands of the Brimmers.

Menus Goodrich was the first settler on the place owned and occupied formerly by William Dewey, later by George Wescott, now by Charles Averill, before 1793. Very near him, and probably nearer the schoolhouse, settled Wait Goodrich. Very little can be learned about this family, although many of them settled early on this side of the river. Before 1819 Henry Bovie had moved here from the farm of the late Allen Scramling, and erected the present buildings. He moved to Union, N. Y. Near here once lived Jacob Wiles.

The vicinity of the stone house was in early time a favorite place for settlement. Here before the Revolution settled the Ogdens. Henry Shepherd came from Massachusetts in the spring of 1787 and settled near here and had a ferry. But the stone that is pointed out as his doorstep is almost in the southeast corner of Charles Averill's farm. He had seven children. Conradt Wiles, brother of "Jose" and "Hans," once

lived in a log house where is now the stone house. Then came Ransom Hunt, Jr. Ezra, son of Samuel, Gates, who built the stone house about 1830, sold the place to Peter Scramling. Later here were Job Mills; Emmet Rathbun; Jacob Hilsinger. The place is now owned and occupied by Hiram Northup.

The Foote place, at present an unoccupied part of the Hale property, derives its name from Elias Foote of Connecticut, who came here from Franklin in about 1811. He traded with Levi Hale for a place in North Franklin.

John Brimmer's old house served as the first schoolhouse in district No. 7. Debora Blakeslee and David Foote were two early teachers. The second schoolhouse was built about 1830 on a site given by Peter Scramling. It was burned in the summer of 1905, and immediately replaced by the present structure. In the school year 1866-7 Maria Scramling was the teacher, and the pupils numbered twenty-six.

What is called the Nicholas Sigsbee farm, now owned by Mrs. H. E. Bugden, was first settled by David Ogden. It was bought by John Snouse of Canajoharie in 1800. Fifteen years later he moved down to the Baker farm where he is said to have kept a tavern. Then came Peter, son of Henry, Scramling, who lived in a log house on the little knoll southeast of the schoolhouse. He was followed on the place by his son George. John Snouse was a famous hunter, as well as soldier. He was taken from the settlement at old Schoharie by the Indians and carried a captive to Canada where he was held a prisoner for three

years before he managed to escape. He could speak the Indian language; and was famed for making the early rude plows. A pair of tongs, made by "Old Mr. Snouts," as he was called, are owned by Mrs. H. J. Hurlbut in Oneonta. Years ago near the corner of the roads by the swamp Jake Cutting had a blacksmith shop.

Ninety years ago the place owned and recently occupied by George Hughston was occupied by Robert and Benedict Northrup. The latter sold to his brother and moved to Addison, N. Y. After Robert Northrup had moved to the river the place was occupied by his sons Hiram and John. Later came Russell Murry. Samuel Clegg bought the place from Ira Bovie. The first settler here was Cyporon Tracy.

The farm owned and occupied by Charles Hughston was in 1795 occupied by Alexander Smith. Ansel Ward bought it from Milo Smith, and lived here about forty years.

The first settlers on the present Edwin Blakely farm were Peter and Elisha Bundy, brothers from Montgomery, Mass. They came in the spring of 1787, the year of the great famine among the settlers on the Susquehanna. Here they spent their first night in town, struck their first blow at the "monstrous big timber" and built their cabins close to the river. Peter Bundy was here six years later, but both brothers soon moved to the Otsdawa. It is said that Peter Bundy first came into Otsego county with William Cooper, who urged him to settle near the lake; but Bundy was interested in the timber, and went farther

down the river to get deeper water for rafting. Here he built his cabin, and fetched his family the next year. The name Bundy is thought to be derived from the forest of Bondy near Paris, France, the "Bundys" being among the adventurers who accompanied William the Conqueror to England and who subsequently turned farmers and settled in Kent. The name is frequently spelled Bonda in local records, but the form Bondy does not occur in this vicinity.

The upper part of the Blakely farm and the strip of land abutting it on the east, of which what is known as the Peter Mickle place is a part, was a lot that was sold by Gouldsbrow Banyar to Henry Klock in 1801. Within five years Klock had moved to Chenango county, having sold the part nearer the river to Houtice Smith and the remainder to John Snouse. The whole tract finally passed into the hands of Peter Scramling. At his death Scramling's large landholdings on this side of the river were divided among his eight children. To-day none are possessed by any of his descendants. The house on the so-called Mickle place was built by Alfred Hess about forty-five years ago. Peter Mickle bought the place in 1888 from John Williams, and it is now occupied by Fred Eliot. Eighty-five years ago the upper part of the Blakely place was occupied by John A. Hodge; it was bought from the Scramling heirs by William Stuart of Madison county in 1851. A century ago the lower part of the Blakely farm was occupied by Philo Goodrich, who built the house there that was burned in 1887; about 1830 a man named Green-

slate lived there; Stuart bought it from Aristarchus Mann in 1851.

Seventy-five years ago on the Blakely farm, back on the mountain beside the old road, lived George Northrup and his son Samuel. A little way above them lived Asel Bennett.

The upper part of the W. H. Baker farm was sold by Gouldsbrow Banyar to John Wattles, who had left the place before 1822. Then came David and Russell Blakeslee. About seventy years ago this part was bought by John, son of Robert, Rathbun from Harvey B. Redfield, brother-in-law of Russell Blakeslee. The first settler on the lower part of the Baker farm was Asahel Packard, a Revolutionary soldier, who came from Massachusetts a short time after Henry Shepherd; within a few years he had moved to the Otsdawa. In 1815 John Snouse bought fifteen acres of this lower part from John T. Smith, which he sold nine years later to Jacob and Levi Han. The Hans lived south of the road where there are yet traces of an old cellar. In 1827 Isaac Abbey sold the entire lower part to Osborne L. Knapp of the Butternuts. Knapp lived in a log house near the present big barn. W. H. Baker bought the upper and the lower parts of this farm from William T. Broadfoot and Riley Sessions respectively.

The farm now occupied by R. A. Wykes was bought by John Christian from Gouldsbrow Banyar in 1793. Christian or Christjohn, whom F. W. Edson calls John Christjohn "Wiles," was a German, had two brothers, and lived over on the hill west of the present house. In 1816 Andrew

Hodge was living on the place, and a few years later, Daniel Swift. Jabez Holmes, who built the present house, sold the farm in 1856 to George and Samuel Northrup mentioned above.

Before 1800 the old John Hubbell farm had been leased to Johannis Lust and Godfrey Calder; but they were not permanent. In 1810 the land was purchased by James Christian, and it later came into the possession of the Hubbells. The upper part of this tract, owned by R. A. Wykes, is unoccupied. The lower part is known as the Cyrus Hunt place from a former resident owner; here once lived Jacob Han.

The land to the west was a century ago owned by Ashbel Goodrich. He sold the greater part to Stephen Northrup, brother of Robert, Benedict and George. Northrup had been a sailor on the high seas during the troubled times that preceded the war of 1812. To the place on the corner where the house was burned came in 1834 Jacob Pratt and his son Sidney. The farm now owned and occupied by Hector Mitchell was early occupied by Ransom Hunt, Jr., who was followed by his son John.

Joseph Northrup, Sr., of Lanesboro, Mass., a soldier of the Revolution, came in 1803, leasing what is called the S. K. Stiles place, now owned and occupied by M. S. Carey.

The strip of land next below, now owned by Van. B. Smith and unoccupied, was leased by Robert Rathbun of Rhode Island, who came in 1801. Jason Goodrich lived there sixty years ago.

The farm now owned and occupied by Alonzo Judd had two early occupants—on one part was

Samuel Northrup, a soldier of 1812, father of the four brothers above mentioned, who came from North Kingston, R. I. before 1801. On the other part was Captain Ezekiel Tracy, originally from Massachusetts, who came hither from the farm of the late Allen Scramling farther up the river. Tracy had eleven children. Other occupants of this place have been Simeon Castle, who moved to Briar Creek; Eli Starr; Addison Rathbun, who bought from Jerome B. Youmans; Hiram Randall.

The Birdsalls, or Burchams as they were called, originally from Long Island, came from Dutchess county. The family is said to have settled first on the north side of the river. In 1794 Squire was on the upper part of the place now owned by Van. B. Smith, where Stephen Bradley once lived; but within ten years was living across the river. Timothy moved from the north side of the river, and eighty-five years ago was living on the lower part of Smith's farm. He sold to Alexander Maxwell, and went to live near his son-in-law John Smith. One hundred ten years ago John lived on the place now owned and occupied by R. A. Hoyt; but before 1813 had moved to the north side of the river. He was followed on the place by his son Nathan; then came his grandson Edwin.

The first school in this vicinity was taught by Abigail Reed in Godfrey Calder's barn. The first schoolhouse in this district stood a little way below Alonzo Judd's, north of the road. Two early teachers were Lemuel French and Albro Bundy. The present schoolhouse, built by Eli Starr, is the second in the district.



## VIII

### The North Side of the River

NINETY-FIVE years ago Jerry French and Ira Carley were living in a clearing of two or three acres on the place owned by the late William White, now occupied by Joseph Rogers. They were rafters, and got into serious trouble by bringing back counterfeit money from Harrisburg. The place was bought by John Tuckey and Benjamin Soden in 1819. The former was sole owner five years later. The Tuckeys were English. Their log house stood about where now runs the railroad. Tuckey and Joseph, brother of Benjamin, Soden worked at their trade of thrashing with the flail. The present house was built and first occupied by Harvey Strong of Merideth.

On the place above in 1800 lived Laban Crandall.

Jerry Carley once lived on the place now owned and occupied by Charles Underwood. Then came Tom Brewster, a negro fiddler. S. Green lived here forty years ago.

Aaron Ferry is said to have been the first settler on the old Moak place, now owned and occupied by Mrs. K. E. Crandall. Ninety years ago Robert Foster kept a tavern there. Deforest and Deluson Warner, brothers from Connecticut, bought this place and the Underwood farm below, and continued the tavern. William Webster

lived here many years. Jacob Moak from Albany county bought the place from Ely Dean.

Jerry French is said to have been the first on the old William (son of John) Youmans farm, now owned and occupied by George Rachard. In 1807 Jacob Gates was living here, and had improved twelve acres.

The farm now owned and occupied by L. C. Dodge, son of Harry, was first settled by John, son of Colonel John, Harper, whose log house was still standing forty years ago. Jesse Broad, father-in-law of the present owner, came to the place before 1821, and built the present house.

The original lessee of the next place was John Kyle; but he never occupied it. Benjamin Bird-sall was probably an early occupant. Later came Henry Hoag. The place is now owned and occupied by Henry Robbins.

Charles Bouck lives on the place which Isaac Gates had settled before 1797. Gates moved to Briar creek, and William VanSlyke was the next there. Later were Abner Ferry; Peter Bundy, Jr., who built the present house; Thomas Burnside.

John, son of Solomon, Youmans of German descent, originally from Dutchess county, bought his land from Gouldsbrow Banyar in 1805. He was drafted in the War of 1812, but furnished a substitute. He had ten children. The old tavern that he kept was closed over eighty years ago, and was converted into a hop-house. William King, a kind old veteran of the Revolution, made his home for a long time with John Youmans, and on winter nights about the tavern fire would

tell his stories of the war. It seems that he had been drum-major, and that it had been the painful duty of his office to administer whatever floggings were ordered to be done with the cat-o'-nine tails. What became of the old soldier is unknown. The present house was built by William Jay. The place is now owned by Clinton Root and occupied by Lambert Burnside.

The Birdsall family, when they first came, are said to have settled down under the knoll on the place now owned and occupied by Earle Root. A huge pine was felled and around the stump they are said to have built their house, the stump serving as a table. On this place in 1796 lived Timothy Birdsall; later Daniel, son of Squire, Birdsall, and then Daniel's brother-in-law, Stephen Bradley. Bradley later lived and died in the village. In 1805 Squire Birdsall was in the immediate vicinity.

The place now owned and occupied by S. B. Blakesley is said to have been first settled by a man named Goodrich. Very early came Michael Birdsall. Later here were Wheeler French, a great hunter, who built the present house; Benonai Cook of Dutchess county; Calvin Hyde. A man named Acker once lived in this vicinity.

On the next lot above, over a century ago, lived James Copley. Ninety years ago Harvey Strong was here. The lot was later owned by Richard and William Horning.

It is interesting to note how many of the same or related families settled near one another. Many of the older Birdsalls lived on this side of the river. John, Timothy and Squire were

brothers. Of their sisters Anna was the mother of Harry Dodge, Mary married John Youmans, and Cynthia was the wife of Benonai Cook. Of their half-brother's, Lemuel, children there were Michael, Benjamin, Sally, wife of James Copley, and Abigail, who married John Harper. With the Birdsalls compare, among others, the Sheldon and the Hopkins families on the West Branch, the Cooks and the Hatheways near Otsdawa, and the Northrups and the Goodriches on the south side of the river.

The first schoolhouse in this district (No. 2) was a frame building, which stood just across the Briar creek road, opposite the present site. The second one was of stone, and was built on the present property by Harry Sheldon and Clark Hopkins in 1836. It stood till 1874. The present schoolhouse, built by T. W. Snyder, is the third one in the district.

The farm, formerly owned and occupied by William Brown, recently purchased by William Hughston, was first settled by John Vermilyea, a soldier of the Revolution. He had two children. He lived in a log house one hundred rods from the river bank. Then, more than a century ago, came Benjamin Birdsall, who built the present house. He moved to the town of Unadilla. Harry Dodge of Dutchess county had bought and was living on the place before 1818. Many years ago there was printed a description of the old tavern that was once kept on this place. It appears to have had anything but a savory reputation.

Before 1820 Abram and Nicholas Horning were

living on the lower part of the place now owned and recently occupied by John Leonard, and what is known as the Harvey Brown place, now owned by Alfred Sutton, respectively. Carlisle Olmstead was a later owner and occupant of the present Leonard place.

Before 1815 the land from just above the present Leonard house to the place settled by John Smith had been leased by Gouldsbrow Banyar to Nahum Smith of Massachusetts. On the upper part of the present Leonard place, on the flat beside the old road, he lived with his father, David, a Revolutionary soldier. The place now owned and occupied by W. J. Loomis has had among others the following occupant-owners—Elisha Kilborn; Solomon Cunningham; Solomon Baldwin. Luther, son of Wheeler, French is said to have once lived there. The next place above, now owned by George Sherman, Jr., was early occupied by Squire Birdsall and his son Harry. Here the former died.

John, brother of Nahum, Smith was born in Massachusetts in 1788. When he became of age, with his little bundle of earthly possessions and an ax, he started on foot for New York state. He settled on the farm lately owned and occupied by his son Chauncey, now owned by the latter's daughter, Mrs. Smith Bundy. Smith leased his land from Gouldsbrow Banyar. His father probably came later. He married Rebecca, daughter of Timothy, Birdsall, who then lived on the south side of the river. Her wedding outfit was carried across to her new home in a canoe.

At the lower edge of Shepherds Corners in 1807 lived Samuel Fisk.

The place so long owned and occupied by George, son of Michael, Birdsall, now occupied by his daughter, Mrs. Harriet Stilson, was bought from Gouldsbrow Banyar by Menus Goodrich one hundred years ago. Six years later the latter sold it to John Birdsall.

The house on the place now owned and occupied by William Shepherd was built about ninety-five years ago by Benjamin, son of Henry, Shepherd, who had bought the farm in 1801. He was a brother of the present owner's grandfather.

Michael Birdsall, of Huguenot descent, came from Harpersfield in 1802, and settled first in a log house near the river as described above, beside his brother Benjamin. In 1809 he bought the lower part of his farm later owned and occupied by his son William, now by the latter's son Webster, from Gouldsbrow Banyar. In 1794 the upper part of his farm was owned and occupied by Zebulon Norton, who lived in a log house on the river bank. This upper part came into the possession of Michael Birdsall in 1811. About 1812 he built the present house, where he kept a tavern.

The place now owned and occupied by Thomas Redding was first settled by a man named Hubbell. Adam Empey lived there in 1807. David Blakely, probably originally from Pawlet, Vt., bought the place in 1811 from Michael Birdsall, who at the same time bought the upper part of the Birdsall farm from Blakely. They virtually traded lots. Five years later Blakely moved fur-

ther up the river, selling to "Elder" John Morse. The latter's son-in-law, Thomas D. Smith, came to the place in 1836.

Mason W., son of James, Hughston came to the village from Sidney in 1824, and lived first in a double log house just above the Baptist church.

Daniel Weller came from Roxbury, Ct., in 1809, buying fifteen acres from Abram Blaklee the next year. His house stood near the one now owned and occupied by Dr. W. S. Cook. The well in the yard is the old Weller well. Daniel Weller was a pioneer blacksmith and his large shop was just west of his house. He was the first supervisor of the town of Huntsville, continuing in office eight years. One of his daughters married Hudson Sleeper.

Abram Blaklee and Ransom Hunt, both from Bennington, Vt., were "double" brothers-in-law. They are said to have come to the town in 1799 to choose a location, when Blaklee built his frame house, and then to have returned for their families. At all events both were here before 1801. Abram Blaklee's original landholdings were on both sides of Main street, and extended from the line of River street nearly to the Baptist church. He was a saddler and a harness-maker. His house stood near the street on the lot now owned and occupied by W. H. Lines, whence it was moved back to Willow street and was occupied by the late Miss Alvira Chase. He had four daughters. Blaklee is said to have come to Vermont from Danbury, Ct., with Ransom Hunt from Roxbury, Ct.

Samuel Root and his son, Dr. Samuel, came from Vermont before 1810. The Root property was bounded by the river and what are now Main, River and Averill streets, and was inherited by James Follett, his son-in-law. The Root dwelling stood near the brick house, now owned and occupied by Morgan Place, which was built by James Follett.

Before 1803 Thaddeus R. Austin, a Connecticut Yankee, was merchant in the old store of Smith and Morey, which stood on the site of the present Bowe block. In 1812 he built a new store directly across the street, which is now occupied by the postoffice. He also erected a two-storied frame building on the site of the Susquehanna House, in front of which was a lawn with trees and a flower garden. The latter was a great curiosity, for any but wild flowers were then a rarity. Austin was said to be of French descent. His brother, Roderick, who had lived thirty years in France, came from "down East way" to spend his declining years with his brother. We can imagine him sitting in the little country store maintaining a silence about his past that none dared break. Rumor had it that he had been a pirate on the seas. The truth is that he had been a privateersman on a ship called "The True Blooded Yankee." An old man, in 1852 T. R. Austin sold out his interests here and started for Wisconsin, whither he had sent his household goods. He was taken sick at Unadilla where he died, and was brought back and buried in the town that he wished never to see again. Austin was the promoter of many enter-



prises, "bought and sold everything and was the agent for the Banyar estate." He was a very aristocratic and dressy man, "noted for the magnificence of his ruffled shirt bosoms." He is said to have been a passenger on Fulton's steamboat on its first trip up the Hudson river.

A few years after 1810 Daniel Lawrence, merchant, built the store where Glen Poole now trades, and a dwelling-house in the rear. He moved to Buffalo. A later occupant of the store was Ezra R. Brewer.

The first settler on the place later bought by Ransom Hunt was Elijah Smith, who had opened a tavern there before 1796. He moved to Ohio, and Samuel(?) Yaw, who seems to have been a sort of wandering innkeeper, played the host in the same place. Then came Ransom Hunt with his wife and four children. He bought his land from Gouldsbrow Banyar, chiefly. His log tavern, possibly the one that Smith and Yaw had used, stood a little south of the present Otego House. Here in 1807 he built a long two-storied frame hotel, which he kept for over thirty years. The wagon-shop and sheds stood directly across the street. Hunt's Hotel was the center of a large sphere of influence, and here all kinds of meetings were held. At the head of the Otsdawa ravine Hunt built one of the first saw mills in town, which, with a distillery near, was sold to Ephraim Sleeper. He erected another saw mill on "Saw Mill Hill," back of George Sherman's, Jr., house. The small grist mill, which he built on the site of the Jennings' Mill, was replaced by a second, which he raised in a snow-storm on

8 June 1816. The present grist mill here was built by Follett and French about 1850.

Jedediah Spicer was the first settler on the place now owned and occupied by George Wilber. Then came Ebenezer Rice. Albertus Becker lived there in 1807. Later were Daniel Rowe, who hanged himself in the barn; James Follett; Levi French. The Spicers and Hazard Corey are said to have come with Ransom Hunt. In 1819 Daniel Knapp, Jr., bought land south of the road, where he ran a carding-machine and clothing-works; his building still stands back of J. E. Truman's house.

"Rich old Mr. Norton" is said to have settled early near the corner of the older Otsdawa road, but soon moved to Genesee county. Philip Helmer was near here in 1798. Ransom Hunt bought the place, and later sold it to "Captain" Peter Bundy, whose sons, Stephen A. and Gilbert S., kept a hotel there. This old Bundy Hotel, now occupied as a dwelling house by George Benedict, was new eighty years ago. Across the road stood its long red barns. William H. Seward once delivered an address from the hotel steps. Southern people with their fine carriages and their slaves used to stop here, and this was the place where the stage, that ran twice a day between Unadilla and Emmons, changed horses. The whole farm is now owned and occupied by William Van Name. On this farm are the rocks from which the Indian maiden is said to have taken her fatal leap.

Before 1799 Barnet Overhizer had leased the

Day farm. About 1818 Henry Shader of Dutchess county was living on the place. Oliver P. Raymond once lived here. Robert Day came to the farm about 1836, and it is now owned by his granddaughters. Before 1809 Godfrey Calder had come from the south side of the river and settled on the hill.

Early on the next place but one was Dr. Warner or Warren. Later here was Elisha Adams. The place is now owned and occupied by Herbert Mumford.

The Hale farm was settled by a family named Hess. Frederick Hess conveyed the place to John Hess in 1801; the latter in 1816 sold a portion to James Blakeslee. In both conveyances mention is made of the Indian paintings on the rocks. The Hess family lived in a partly dug-out dwelling on the north side of the road a little way above the present house. Blakeslee occupied the present lower tenant house, which then stood just south of the road some distance below its present site. Obadiah Blakeslee, his nephew, lived here afterward, having moved from near the upper tenant house. Other occupants of this farm, as a whole or in part, have been John Rathbun; Ezra Gates, who built a stone house on the place; Albro Bundy; Gilbert Stannard, who sold the farm to Levi Hale of North Franklin in 1844. In this year the present house was built. The Hales were originally from Connecticut. Ninety years ago the "Oxbow" was estimated to contain about fifteen acres. Some say that it was from Hale's Rocks that the Indian girl of the legend leaped to her death in plain

view of her father, who was on the opposite side of the river.

Many years ago Bradley and Nathaniel Blakeslee lived on what was afterward known as the Nelson Cole place, now owned by E. E. Glifford. Bradley studied medicine and went west. Nathaniel built Mechanics Hall in the village. There was once a "temperance" hotel kept on this place.

What is called the James Cole place, now owned and occupied by E. E. Glifford, was first settled by John Scramling, who lived in a log house on the river bank, where afterwards lived "Hans" Wiles. Scramling married a daughter of "Rich old Mr. Norton," and followed his father-in-law to the West. His relation to the other Scramlings is unknown. Jacob Woolhart once owned a few acres of this place. A man named Dean once lived here.

Jonathan, father of Osborn L., Knapp had located before 1811 on the place owned and occupied formerly by William Hunt, now by Frank Hunt. He kept a tavern in a log house on the river bank. A later owner was Zephania Cole, who moved here from the vicinity of schoolhouse No. 9 on Mill creek. Cole had large holdings in this locality, and Nelson and James were his sons.

The first settler on the next place was John Vanderwarker. The place was bought from him by David Blakely, who lived here a long time and built the present house. Blakely was a first cousin of John Blakely. Later here was Reuben Janes, and still later, Charles Miles. The place

is now owned by Frank Annable and occupied by William Naylor.

The present schoolhouse in this district is the third. The first one stood some distance below the present site, south of the road, on land now owned by Frank Hunt.

Over one hundred years ago John Winn was living in a log house across the road from S. S. Crandall. His father, Robt. E. Winn, is said to have settled here immediately after the Revolution. The family was related to the Scramlings, and well known on the Mohawk.

Ninety-five years ago Elijah Ferry was living a few rods west of the Oneonta line, near where the saw mill of Barnes and Fox stood in 1867. Daniel Bird of Rhode Island was an early settler in this immediate neighborhood, on the place now occupied by Charles Weatherly.

## IX

### Mill Creek

THIS creek was settled later than other portions of the town. The early settlers lumbered the large amount of pine and hemlock. The first saw mill was probably above the Glen, on land now owned by A. C. Bennett. A dam and a mill were built early by the Scramlings on the Q. B. Parish place. This mill was later owned by Ira and Reuben Parish, and Darius Ward was their sawyer. There have been as many as six saw mills on the creek at one time. The water-power was generally poor; it required two mills running day and night for a week to saw 24,000 feet of lumber. About eighty years ago there were thirty-six log houses from the Glen to the old Oxford turnpike. The last one was on the place of Stoughton Horton. The oldest houses are the Thomas house, the old dwelling on the Thayer farm and the house where Clarence Cook lives.

A century ago the places now owned and occupied by Frank Hunt and S. S. Crandall were covered with woods. The land about the mouth of Mill creek was a part of the 1000 acre tract of Sir William Johnson that passed into the hands of the Scramlings. Other large holders here have been John Winn, Zephania Cole and Adam Horton.

The Q. B. Parish place was early bought by Peter Scramling. In 1864 Ira and Reuben, sons of Eldred, Parish sold the place to Adam Horton.

Before 1811 Adam Empey had a saw mill on

the place now owned and occupied by A. C. Bennett. He probably moved here from the river, buying from John Hornby of Great Britain, who, at about this time, owned all the land from this point nearly to the schoolhouse (No. 11). Others on this farm have been Booth; Spaulding; Daniel Washburn; Royal Briggs.

Noah Wakely had a chopping on the creek in 1804, probably on the place of M. V. Briggs. Later owners have been Zephania Cole; Judson and Parnett Beardsley; Adam Horton. In the woods on Calder Hill, back of Briggs,' is what is called the Brisee lot, now owned by Wood and Phelps. Here once lived Henry Brisee. Near by is an old cemetery.

Solomon Squires of Connecticut was on the C. H. Broadfoot place before 1815. He sold to Adam Horton, and moved to Laurens, and later to the "Plains." The Squires and Hurlbut families were fast friends, "whose tastes ran to clams."

Jesse Hurlbut came from Litchfield, Ct., to Butternuts in 1815. About two years later he came to the present Morris Hunt place, now occupied by Aaron Scott, buying through T. R. Austin, agent. He had nine children.

The farm of Anson Hurlbut, now occupied by John Herring, and that of Stoughton Horton, farther up the creek, now occupied by Emmet Terpening, were early owned by Thomas Rowe, who lived in the village. Before 1821 he had sold both to Nathan S. Hurd, his brother-in-law, who in turn about 1839 sold them to Cornelius Livingston of Schoharie. The former place was inherited by the latter's daughter; the latter, by

his only son, William, who lived there a long time.

John Hornby is said to have had a tannery early on the place now occupied by George Thomas. Ninety-five years ago Samuel Freeman and his son Willet occupied the farm. To the north were the lands of Samuel VanSlyke, and to the South, those of Juston Hunt. Freeman had been a sea-captain and had not forgotten the forceful language used at sea. Judson Beardsley later owned the place, which then passed into the hands of William Thomas.

Benjamin Knott was an early settler on the property later owned and occupied by Amos Hurlbut. The part east of the road, known as the old Eli Starr farm, is owned by Walter Couse; the part west of the road, by Gilbert Horton.

The first schoolhouse on Mill creek was of logs and stood some distance south of the present third one, in what is now district No. 11. The second was a frame building and was erected by Chester Thayer. Some early teachers were James Bundy, Alonzo Eldred, Alanson Thomas, David Cook and Amy Haight.

On the site of the present schoolhouse once stood "Rowe's Barn," which was said to be haunted. Cornelius Livingston dug under it to find evidence of murder done. Reliable(?) witnesses testified that they had heard strains of music proceeding from the spot. The phenomenon was supposed to be due to the ghost of a murdered pedler, who had once been a member of a band. Just above the schoolhouse in 1820 lived Jacob Neff; above him, in her log hovel near the creek, lived "Old M's Tucker."



On the Beetle Hill road: Luther Focus, who was migratory, once lived a little east of the house on the place owned by Philip Hodges, occupied by Charles Emerson. Eighty years ago Stephen Gould lived on the place now owned and occupied by C. J. Herring.

Alanson Thomas came from Connecticut in 1830 and settled back on the hill on land now owned by Henry Doliver. Later he bought the place now owned and occupied by Elisha Trask, and also the place of John Herring; on the former he spent his last years. Alanson, Jr., bought the old Murry farm, now owned by Walter Hodges and occupied by Charles Short. Of the Murrys there were several sons; the father of all was Eldridge Murry.

Rufus Cook was on the property now owned and occupied by Eli and Taylor Thayer more than a century ago. In 1821 Noah Wakely lived here. In 1824 Benjamin Butterfield's house stood near the creek where there was a steam saw mill twenty years ago. Chester, son of Asa, Thayer bought the farm and lived in the old unoccupied house now there. Cook later lived up in the corner of the roads, where Norman Ellis recently owned, near where Dennis Davis once lived.

The Stevens came from Connecticut and were among the earliest on the creek. Moses Stevens, a Revolutionary soldier, lived on the place now owned and occupied by N. C. Terpening, west of the road. Of his sons, Abiather lived just above, on the same place, and Simon, where F. N. Boyd owns and lives. Near the "Big Rock" or

"Wolf's Rocks," on the road that here turns off to the east, Abiather Stevens was murdered.

The old Joseph Doliver farm included the places now owned by F. H. Young, Hiram Wiles and King J. Hatheway. The Dolivers were from Rhode Island. Joseph Doliver had four children. His father, Joseph, was a Revolutionary soldier, and is buried near West Oneonta.

John Empsey, a cooper, was an old settler across the road from Orason Bowen's. Where Bowen's house stands James O'Brien lived in 1824.

Samuel Davis of Rhode Island settled the farm off the road, on Oak or Huckleberry Hill, where Otis Cook recently lived, now owned and occupied by Andrew Perry. A later occupant of the place was Philip Helmer.

Clarence Cook owns and occupies the old David Lawrence farm. The latter was followed on the place by Pasco, son of Thomas, Matteson (Madison), who had lived there about sixty years in 1884.

The first schoolhouse in this district (No. 9), built before 1820, stood east of the little creek. The present is the third. Some early teachers were Sally Northrup, her sister Cynthia, Martha Miller and a Miss Rouse.

Near the site of the present schoolhouse in 1825 lived Josua Hague. Many years before Seth Rowley had built a saw mill here on the little creek. Just below lived Daniel Doliver. A little way above here, on the old road east of the turnpike, in 1820 lived Jacob, son of Abraham, Pratt. He sold to Levi, son of Asa, Thayer. The

place formerly owned and occupied by Delory Mumford, now by Frank Baird, was settled by a man named Bancroft. He was a Spainard and a physician, and practised many years.

North of the old turnpike and a little east of Charles Bowen's once stood the peculiar house of Barney Brooks. It was about forty feet long and sixteen feet wide. On this farm about 1834 a man named Burroughs claimed to have found a silver mine, having melted up his wife's spoons to "salt it down." Several caught the fever, and the farm was bought at a fabulous price. A shop was erected, a forge built and drilling and blasting continued for a year or more. Burroughs did not succeed in keeping his secret, and the bubble burst. The great silver mine of Arabia was abandoned. A large pile of almost worthless ore, containing a very small amount of lead and antimony, was left a monument to the god of greed that can still be seen. When Burroughs fled he is said to have stopped at the house of Samuel B. Luther to leave this message for those who had trusted him: "Seek me early but you cannot find me, and where I go ye cannot come."

"Old Grannie Mack" once lived some distance north of this mine. She later lived somewhere on the East Branch. The floor of her hut was the earth, and a hole in the roof served as a chimney. She begged most of her meals, and spun thread to eke out a scanty subsistence. She was the widow of Abner Mack, who was probably a soldier, for she drew her little pension regularly from T. R. Austin.

## X

### The Otsdawa

ISAAC Edson lived on the place now owned and occupied by W. A. Secor. His house and store stood east of the road. Over in the Otsdawa ravine he owned a grist and saw mill, a distillery and a carding-machine, the first of which was run by William Niles. In 1814 Edson sold his real estate to "Captain" Peter Bundy, and hastily moved to Laurens. Moses Bundy occupied the farm and built the stone house about 1841. The buildings in the ravine were allowed to decay, except the saw mill, which was mysteriously burned. Near here in 1798 lived James Tillotson.

In 1792 Ashel Packard occupied a small house that stood where V. M. Gates lives. He was Justice of the Peace at a time when they were appointed by the Governor. "He was a dignified and highly esteemed man." He had eight children. His oldest son, John, was drowned while rafting on the river in 1813. Johnson Hawley once had a blacksmith shop and ashery here, having moved hither from farther up the East Branch.

Some years before 1800 "Captain" Peter Bundy had moved from the south side of the river to the formerly Orville Wilsey, the now Dr. O. J. Wilsey place, where he built a house and a saw mill. He became a large land holder, owning from S. Burdick's south line to the river. He had eight sons. On the river road below Briar creek he placed Peter, Jr., who afterwards went to Al-

leghany county to engage in lumbering; James, where King J. Hatheway now owns and lives; Levi, where G. Morrell French later lived; David, who built the present house, on the home farm; Ephraim, on what is known as the Edwin Root place; Moses, where W. A. Secor owns and lives; and with his other sons, Stephen A. and Gilbert S., he moved to the property, now owned by William Van Name, which he bought from Ransom Hunt. Here he lived till his death in 1822.

Ephraim Cross once lived on a part of the Wilsey farm.

The Bundys and the French's were closely related. Before 1804 William French had moved from the south side of the river to the East Branch, and was living back on the old road, on what is now a part of the Wilsey farm. He eventually went to Ohio. His son, Abel, bought on the east side of the creek land that is now owned by Mrs. Sherman Burdick and occupied by Oliver Harris; in 1849 he bought the Ira Scofield farm and lived there with his son Dennis. G. Morrell, another son of Abel French, bought fifteen years later what is now the upper (on the East Branch) part of the Wilsey farm.

To the farm of the late J. H. Talmadge in 1811 came John, father of Ebenezer, Blakely from Massachusetts, who lived in a log house east of the road. Later he built a frame house west of the road which was soon burned; he then fitted up his wagon-house, and lived in it several years. He built a carding-machine and a building for cloth-dressing at "Kelseyville," which was burned with a large quantity of wool. He ran for Con-

gress against John H. Prentice, the founder of The Freeman's Journal.

The present schoolhouse in this district is the second. Two early teachers were Marilla Bundy and Polly Cook.

Ira Scofield came to the next place from Troy in 1810, and built the present house. He sold to Abel French, and went to live with his son in New York. The farm is now occupied by Charles Conklin.

Eli Odell was an early occupant of the place now owned and occupied by O. F. Thorpe. He moved west. A later occupant was William Loomis.

The next place, now owned by W. S. Hatheway, was settled before 1800 by "Captain" James French. His cousin, Wheeler French, who loved the chase, was here later.

Some years before 1800 Casper Overhizer had come from the Mohawk to the old Elias Arnold place, now owned and occupied by W. S. Hatheway. His father, Conrad, lived on the next place, now owned and occupied by King J. Hatheway. The buildings on the latter place were erected by James Bundy, who built the barn of pine bought from Alexander Hatheway for \$1. The Overhizer family, originally from Rensselaer county, was noted for its longevity.

Fifty years ago Peter, son of James, Bundy was living on the place now owned and occupied by John J. Enderlin. "He was an ironsided man, who took a backbone farm and made it good."

Benjamin Green was a very early settler on the place now owned by Herman and Emory Fish

and occupied by the latter. Samuel Hyatt, Jr., and his son Lewis were here later; still later, Solomon Crandall. The lot to the south in the angle formed by the roads was known as the Bates Lot.

Christian Couse, a Mohawk "Dutchman," was an early occupant of the next farm, now owned and occupied by Louis Boyd.

In 1802 Samuel Fisk was living in a hewn log house near M. J. Ford's, east of the road. He is described as a thin, cranky, rough old man, who once killed an Indian on the Day flat near the river. In his old age he became blind, and the neighbors would often fetch him to their homes for supper, and then spend the evening listening to his stories of the Revolution. Later occupants of this place were David Washburn; John Rowley; Levi B. Packard. Mrs. Rowley was a sister of John Beaumont, and she brought the old sailor here from Rhode Island before 1830.

Frederick Martin, a thorough German from Amsterdam, N. Y., is thought to have been on the place of the late Dewitt Martin, his grandson, as early as 1792. "He was a tanner and a farmer, and was killed by a kick of a horse." Of his ten children his son Samuel had the upper part of his father's farm, known later as the Hess place, now owned by William Bundy.

Edward Pope, and later his son Daniel, occupied the farm now owned by Mrs. Caroline, widow of Wallace, Martin. Pope bought his farm in 1814 from Walter Lathrop and Samuel Hyatt, both resident owners. He once owned the Bunnell Mills.

On the east side of the creek: Elisha Bundy, Jr., lived where Henry Doliver lives.

The place now owned by Wallace Martindale and occupied by Erastus Breffle, was settled early by Arnold, father of Allen and Isaac, Martindale. He is described as a large man and a stonemason. Seventy years ago he was living in Otsdawa.

Phineas St. John of Connecticut settled, possibly as early as 1790, near here in the woods. He had six sons and seven daughters. He had been a sailor, and was a very active man; for at the age of seventy he once stood on his head on the ridge-pole of his barn. He built all the buildings on his place, which was recently occupied by Jay Lent, but is owned by King J. Hatheway.

Samuel Hyatt, a Revolutionary soldier, lived in the little old abandoned house that stands east of the house now occupied by Mrs. Lucy, widow of Stephen, Wilsey. He came from Wilton, Ct. in 1807, and bought his land from Richard Smith. He carved his initials in the peak of the barn and the "H" is still plainly visible. Mrs. Wisey has his old armchair. The story of his death needs confirmation. He is said to have pulled a tooth from his jaw, a cancer rolled out and he died.

Bunnell's Mills were early on the creek, on the present Merithew place. Here lived Jesse Bunnell. John Montgomery was an early miller. A later owner was Edward Pope, and then John Phillips. The first mill here was on the west bank of the creek. In 1845 John Phillips, Jr., built



a large grist mill on the east bank at a cost of over \$5000, which was taken down by Richard Merithew. John Niles was an owner of the property before it came into possession of William, grandson of Philip, Merithew.

Jesse Hyatt came from Connecticut in 1816 or '17 to the farm owned and occupied later by his son John, now by his grandson Rufus J. Just above here Johnson Hawley had a blacksmith shop and scythe snath factory, living in the old abandoned house owned by King J. Hatheway.

John Lamb, a soldier of the Revolution, once lived in this vicinity.

About 1794 Samuel Green settled what was afterwards known as the Thomas Haynes place, which is now owned by Mrs. Lemman Rowe. Curtis Green is said to have owned 400 acres around the old Green Street schoolhouse. Robert B. Davis, the latter's brother-in-law, lived near him, on land owned by Charles Terry.

Nathaniel Emerson of Connecticut had settled before 1813 the place formerly owned and occupied by Rufus Mudge, now, by Almon Mudge. He is said to have been a soldier, probably of the Revolution. He died in 1813 in his sixtieth year and is buried on the farm.

"Captain" Jenks of the Revolution was the first on the place now owned and occupied by Edmund Hatheway. Later here was Stephen Cook, and he was followed by Alexander, son of John King, Hatheway, grandfather of the present owner.

The first Green Street schoolhouse was the

log house of James Boldman, which stood at the foot of the hill, west of the road near an elm tree, below George Davis'. Then in 1816 a schoolhouse was built west of the road, about twenty rods below the little run of water. The present schoolhouse is the third frame one in the district, which seems, originally, to have included Otsdawa. The first school meeting that is recorded was held 1 May 1813, and the first teacher mentioned was James Burch. During the year 1819-20 the attendance was sixty-three. About sixty years ago a Mormon preacher held services in this schoolhouse.

Phineas Cook, who came with his brothers Jair, Stephen and Elias from Massachusetts, before 1798 was living in Otsdawa near where Peter Livingston now lives. He owned the land where the hamlet stands. He built a carding-machine and cloth-dressing establishment above the road, near where Mrs. Catharine Banker now lives, on the old Isaac Hyatt place. This was the first of its kind in town. The old dam below the road was built by him for a saw mill; here, later, was another cloth-dressing establishment, once run by James Stewart. Cook raised teasels to use in his clothing business, and also medical plants. About 1823 Rufus Mudge of Cooperstown, a hardy tanner and shoemaker, and Cook built a tannery below the latter dam, near Otis Holbrook's. Phineas Cook died in 1826, and Mudge soon moved the business to land bought from John Terry, by the corner below Charles Terry's. He bought the frame of the house now there from Phineas St. John, who intended to start a store

there. Rufus Mudge did a large business. He bought his hides in South America. There by the corner once lived Jolas(Julius) Hatheway, son of John King.

The greater part of Phineas Cook's property at his death passed to his second son, Woodbury K., who built the large house owned formerly by Barber B. Sheldon, now owned and occupied by the latter's widow and daughter. This he sold to William H. Couse. The following men have kept tavern in this house—Crum, Hitchcock, William H. Couse, Tanner, and, last of all, Schuyler Osborne.

The first store in Otsdawa was started before 1828 by Norman Phillips where S. S. Sheldon lives. The earliest physicians in order were Winslow Whitcomb, Ralph Shepherd and Isaac Fairchild. Dr. Whitcomb also lived a little way below the first schoolhouse built in the Green Street district, where he kept a little tavern. One of the first schools was held in Phineas Cook's clothing-mill.

John King Hatheway came overland by ox-team from Suffield, Ct., probably in 1800, and bought land at \$1 per acre. He had nine children. He probably settled where later his son Cephas lived. The latter had an apiary. The early fallows grew up with white clover, and, with the large amount of basswood, furnished much good honey. General Jacob Morris, aide to General Lee in the Revolution, once came to the house of Cephas Hatheway to buy some honey. He is said to have peered into the glass and to have remarked how

young he looked. Later here have been Cyrus Hatheway, and still later, Robert Cook. The place is now owned and occupied by John Harris.

Ezra Griffith built for a hotel the large house, east of the creek, near Thomas Decker's saw mill, now owned by G. H. Jenks and occupied by Daniel Guile. Griffith had a saw mill here in 1815, but soon moved to Illinois. Later Dexter Hatheway, and before 1840 a man named Gray, kept hotel here in this house. This locality has been a favorite one for saw mills. Here in 1797 was Brook's and Gorton's saw mill.

Samuel B. Luther was a wagon-maker, and was an early occupant of the place now owned and occupied by Bennet Weatherly.

Samuel Hubbard, an early shoemaker, lived where W. L. Fairchild now owns and lives.

James C., son of Joseph Youngs, was an early owner of the large tract adjoining Laurens, later owned by his son Norman D., now by Arthur Jester.

John Boldman, or Bullman, was a singular man, about whom many stories have been told. In 1812 he cut down a white ash tree about where stands the house of J. T. Sheldon, and took out 230 pounds of honey. He had settled the Terry place before 1800, probably to hunt, for he was a hunter by profession. He is said to have moved to Michigan. "Captain" John Terry came, originally from Connecticut, in 1812, and hired rooms with the Taylors for about two years, when he bought the Boldman place, probably from the Taylors. He was a blacksmith here for almost

thirty years. His shop was in the ravine below the falls, which gave him power for bellows and grindstone. He made hoes and plough-irons, and by his forge the old soldiers were accustomed to meet and tell their stories of the war. The place is now owned and occupied by his grandson Charles Terry.

On the hill to the west once lived a Langendyke. Peter Eymer was a Rhode Island Yankee, and lived first on the cross-road near where James Lent now lives. The first spring that he was in town, he said that he subsisted on milk and tender basswood leaves. Later he got some land from John Terry by the corner on the old turnpike, where Eugene Holbrook used to live. There he set up a little lathe, and made cane-chairs, puddling-sticks and the like. He is said to have brought the fashion of whiskers into the vicinity. He is said to have had a brother named Philip in the "Black River country," who, it is claimed, was the progenitor of the Armours of packing-house renown, one of the names, either Eymer or Armour, having been corrupted.

Before 1797 John Taylor was living on the place now owned and occupied by George Brown. There were three Johns in the family at one time. One of them had a blacksmith shop. John Taylor once told of having taken refuge in a barrel during some most unusual engagement in the Revolution.

Some distance above this place in 1813 lived Josiah Northup. Near here, very early, was Cornelius Sixbury; also Ebenezer Rice. Years ago a road, beginning near the corner below

Charles Terry's, ran northerly along the ridge east of the present road. On this road, back of Frank Garner's, was the Elisha Nason place; farther to the north on this road lived Daniel Gorton.

What is known as the George Collar place, now owned and occupied by Frank Garner, is said to have been first settled by an Allen. Later came Jacob Pratt, and then, Isaac Wheeler. A man named Antis and his wife are said to have starved to death in their miserable log hut here where they are buried.

Jacob Reynolds lives on a road that formerly continued east over the hill, meeting the East Branch road near W. L. Fairchild's. To this place from Amsterdam, N. Y., about 1807, came Joseph Youngs, a Revolutionary soldier, originally from Stamford, Ct. He had a family of sixteen, and was grandfather to one hundred twenty-five. In this vicinity lived Stephen Cook. South of the road once lived Hiram Slade, who moved to Oneonta. About one quarter of a mile toward the east on this road lived John King Hatheway, Jr., father of Julius.

Oliver Judson was early on the place now owned and occupied by S. A. Emerson and A. J. Brown.

The first settler on the place now owned by G. N. Luther was Rufus Phelps, brother-in-law of John Brimmer. Samuel P. Allen settled on this place when there were no settlers nearer than three miles. Later here was Nathan Wheeler, and still later, Henry Vanduzen. "Captain" Wheeler once followed and killed a bear that had gotten a kettle over its head.

About 1790 Samuel Gates from Canaan, Ct., settled where later his son Urbin, and still later, Lorenzo Lent lived. The place is now owned and occupied by Albert Hoag. Samuel Gates had eight children.

Just east of this old Gates place in 1814 stood a log schoolhouse. Two early teachers in this district were Mary Taylor and Anson Judson.

The settlement of the West Branch had begun before 1800, and was made largely by people from Rhode Island. At its head in 1810 lived Jair Cook, Ajax Seeley, Lewis Lane, Francis Wagmire, Thomas and Russell Weaver, John Lewis, Henry Green and Chester Niles. All are gone except the descendants of Jair Cook.

Jair Cook, born probably near Preston, Ct., came before 1800 to the place now owned and occupied by B. A. Cook, his grandson. It has been said that Jair Cook first bought two-thirds of an acre from Cornelius Brooks; if this be true, he lived first near Otsdawa. The house on the present Cook place is claimed to be over one hundred five years old. Benjamin Howe, a Revolutionary soldier, came on foot from Connecticut to live with his daughter Lucy, wife of Jair Cook. "He was a blind old man, led by a little dog." Jair Cook, whose father's name was John, had at least five brothers. Phineas and Stephen have already been mentioned. Elias settled in the town of Morris; Parley settled in Springfield, Mass.; and Benaijah, ancestor of Converse Cook, went on to Columbus, Ohio.

The following places had the following occupants about seventy years ago: The T. J. Martin

place, Jephtha Baker; the William Harris place, Debias(?) Vanduzen; the B. C. Hatheway place, Green Hopkins; the William Brown place, George Hopkins; and the P. L. Burdick place, Lovett Jenks.

Anson Judson settled on the cross-road where Timothy, son of Henry, Sheldon lived after his marriage. The place is now owned and occupied by Timothy's son John.

Benjamin, father of Freeman, Edson, a Revolutionary soldier, came from Stafford, Ct., about 1810 to the place now owned and occupied by M. A. Edson, his grandson.

On the next place, known as the J. A. Cook farm, now owned and occupied by Charles Kiel, William Brown, Jr., was an early settler.

Thurston Brown came with Jonathan Weaver from Rhode Island, and married his daughter. He settled on the place owned and occupied by the late James U. Brown, where his son Thurston was born in 1806.

Samuel L., son of Nathaniel, Emerson was an early settler on the place now owned and occupied by James Lent. He later occupied the next place east. His brother Dudley lived still farther east, on the place now occupied by C. C. Northup.

The Weavers were Quakers from Rhode Island. They settled very early near the church, east of the road, on land owned by the late James U. Brown. Christopher Weaver bought land here in 1793. Abner and Thomas Weaver moved west. Very little can be learned about the family.



George Carr was early on the place now owned by James Lent.

The place now owned and occupied by David Starr was early occupied by a man named Vanduzen. Rowland Carr, who came from Rhode Island horseback over eighty years ago, moved hither from farther down the creek, to live with his mother, Lydia.

The first schoolhouse on the West Branch was modeled from an old log hog-pen, and stood a little below A. L. Moon's, west of the road. The second schoolhouse in this district stood on the corner opposite David Starr's. The present structure is the third. Some early teachers were Albro Bundy, Ebenezer Robbins, Douglas Arnold and James Emmons. This district (No. 17) has been called the Killawog District.

Before 1799 William Brown, a soldier of 1812, had come from Rhode Island to the place now owned and occupied by R. G. Cornell. His house stood a little south of the present dwelling. Isaac Cornell bought the place from James Brown in 1858.

Jeffrey Watson, an old sailor and a great storyteller, lived where later Clark Hopkins lived, on the place now owned by Mrs. L. B. Waite, daughter of Hopkins, and occupied by Henry Haines.

John Clark Hopkins and his father-in-law, Henry Sheldon, came by ox-team from Kingston, R. I. in 1817. The journey took two weeks. Hopkins stopped for a time in Laurens, where his father, Samuel, stayed. He then lived for about eight years on Flax Island, on the Trask property. Finally, about 1827, he came to the West

Branch, buying fifty acres from Henry Sheldon, west of the road opposite the place now owned and occupied by his daughter Amy Hopkins. The house on the latter place was built by Willard Cheney over ninety years ago. Cheney was followed on the place by Jacob Knolls; James Brown; Aaron Sheldon, from whom Hopkins bought the place about 1835.

Henry Sheldon came directly to the West Branch, and lived first on the place now owned and occupied by Wallace Martindale. With him for a time lived his son-in-law Rowland Carr. Sheldon later lived on the fifty acres which he sold to Hopkins. Still later he occupied the place on which Parley, brother of Eben and Silas, Harris once lived, and which, now unoccupied, is owned by John Harris. Henry Sheldon had eight children.

Over one hundred years ago Wyram, brother of Abel, French settled the place now owned by G. R. Brown and occupied by Irving H. Allen. His house stood west of the road. A later occupant was Jonathan Brown.

Before 1797 Colonel Elisha Bundy had settled on the place now owned and occupied by Arthur Foote. He was later a pioneer of Bundysburg, Ohio. Peleg Burdick, originally from Albany county, a Revolutionary soldier, then came from Kortright. He had eight children. He was followed on the place by his son Ethan. J. S. Jenks, the latter's son-in-law, was later occupant and owner.

Henry Sheldon, Jr., cleared the land and built the buildings on the place now owned and occupied by Sherman Burdick.

## XI

### Flax Island Creek

ABOUT seventy years ago there were three log houses between the old corner at the lower edge of Shepherds Corners and the forking of the road. One stood near where James Lamb lives, and was occupied by Joseph Wyman. Just above lived Palmer Clark, where later the creek washed Charles Morley out of house and home. The third, near Fred Shepherd's milking-shed, was occupied by Samuel Kyle, who afterwards lived on the south side of the river in a hewn log house on the present R. A. Hoyt farm.

In 1810 Freeman Trask lived on the old Morgan Lewis Farm, now owned and occupied by Herbert Lily, where he built a saw mill. In 1815 he went to Allentown, Pa., with some cattle to sell for T. R. Austen. He failed to return, and Austin found him living peaceably in Ohio under the name of Isaac Brown.

The farm now owned and occupied by J. D. Burrell has had before him the following owners—Allen Wiles; P. G. Finch, Benjamin Fuller; Levi, son of Elijah, Place, father-in-law of the present owner.

The place now owned and occupied by E. W. Bugbee was settled by Jason Bugbee, his grandfather, over ninety-five years ago. Bugbee, probably from Connecticut, moved from the west side of the creek to this place, where he built a saw mill.

Before 1800 Elijah Place probably from Connecticut had settled on the farm now owned and occupied by Thaddeus Place. He was a stonemason, and had seven sons. His son Gilbert inherited the farm.

One hundred years ago, in the woods, Chester Lamb was living in what is now the southeast corner of E. J. Rathbun's dooryard. Later here were John Fowler; William I. Birdsall; Smith Birdsall.

Daniel Smith lived for a short time on what is known as the J. B. Wykes place, now owned by Fitch Gilbert and unoccupied. Chauncey Smith lived here, and built the present house in 1853. Both Hiram Fowler and Jason Bugbee have lived on this place.

Ninety years ago Zebrina Lee and Peter Lamb were living on what is called the J. D. Clark place, now owned and occupied by Daniel Hungerford. Lee moved west. A Youngs family was here before Simeon Castle, who came from Briar creek to the place before 1827.

Benjamin Cummings was a farrier, and made potash salts on the old Lyman Castle place, now owned by Daniel Hungerford. Later occupants were James and Albert Lynch.

A Frenchman named George Galaher lived for a time on the Fowler farm on his westward journey. William Birdsall lived here later and built the present house. The farm changed hands frequently. It finally came into possession of Hiram Fowler, and is now occupied by his grandson A. B. Fowler.

Noah Trask, an old man, lived on the present M. P. Finch place in 1810. His brother William went to Philadelphia with some cattle for T. R. Austin, caught the yellow fever, and came home to die. F. W. Edson in his letters gives a vivid description of the corpse and the funeral. Parley Pember, brother-in-law of William Trask, then occupied the farm, and taught the district school a number of terms. Eighty years ago Calvin Fuller from Briar creek bought one hundred twelve acres here at \$7 per acre. His log house stood a few rods north of the present house, which he built in 1835. His son-in-law Perry G. Finch came to the place about 1580. Fuller had eight children.

Parley Pember is said to have been an early settler on the farm now owned by A. R. Squire. A Slate family occupied the old frame house which Squire used as a sheep cote. Across the road in the upper corner once lived a Haight family. The present house was built by Benjamin Fuller about forty years ago. Many years ago a clairvoyant with a witch-hazel wand pretended to find gold above the present house, west of the road. Parley and John Harris, Nathan Hopkins, and Merritt Sutton blasted and dug, working in silence lest a spoken word cause the "spirits" to snatch the treasure away. It is said that someone threw a skunk into the digging and broke up the mining. The hole they dug may still be seen.

The first schoolhouse in this district stood on the line between the Finch and the Squire farms, west of the road.

Among others on the farm now owned and occupied by J. H. Burdick have been W. T. Haight; H. Carr; Ezekiel Burdick, the present owner's father.

The two Trask places, now owned and occupied by Marion and Henry Trask, were originally one. Here many years ago lived two brothers, Eben and Silas Harris, from Connecticut, who made large quantities of salts. Rodman Fuller once lived here.

Moses Richards settled early on the place now owned and occupied by Charles Hoag; he moved west. Wallace Wyman, who built the present house, sold the place to Charles Pearce, who sold to Hoag.

Ebenezer Knapp lived where Edwin Hamilton lives. Here later was Asa Lamb, and still later, John Carr. Knapp's house stood near the line between Otego and Unadilla, as the towns then existed. When his resignation as captain of militia in Unadilla was not accepted, he got permission from Oliver Burdick to build a log shack over this line on the latter's land, and "Captain" Knapp moved into Otego. After Darius Niles had been elected at a special election in Unadilla, "Mr." Knapp returned unto his own peaceful pursuits.

Increase Niles, originally from Massachusetts, came from Milford Center some years before 1810, and settled on the lower part of the place now owned by J. T. Sheldon, in a log house east of the main creek-road. About 1880 this old house was moved up above the cemetery, and used as a Quaker church, which was attended

by the Sodens, the Trumans and others, and where Timothy Crandall and Caleb Braley were early preachers. Increase Niles, who is said to have taught the first school in the town of Milford, died in 1817. He had seven children. His youngest son, William, built the present house. When its cellar was dug, the skeleton of a woman was unearthed, funeral services were held and it was buried in the cemetery near by, land for which was given by William Niles. He finally moved to Puckerhuddle. Later here have been Walter Southerland; George Barton; J. Morrell Bennett.

Two early teachers in this district were Mary Barker and Zedka Spaulding.

In 1814 Daniel Marr, Ephraim Woodward and Ituel Persons, all from New Hampshire, settled on the head of the creek on a 1200 acre tract of wild forest land. There was no road to it, and like most settlers they did not ask who owned the land. First a log house was built for Marr near the creek on the place now owned and occupied by Ephraim Brink. They then chopped two acres on each of their lots, and a road was cut from near the schoolhouse to where Aaron Wood once lived, on the place formerly owned and occupied by S. W. Smith, now owned by R. G. Cornell, where a house was built for Woodward. On the place owned and occupied formerly by L. C. Fish, now by James Sutton, they built a house for Persons. They then returned for their families, taking with them a tame fawn that brought a "fabulous price." Ephraim Woodward is described as a big raw-boned Yankee loving his pipe; in 1827 he was living back in

the lot on J. H. Burdick's, west of the road. The Marrs were Irish, the grandfather, James, having come from Ireland.

A few years after 1814 Robert Day and Zebediah Barker, both originally from New Hampshire, settled in the woods near the creek, on subdivision lot No. 4. Each built a log house, cleared his land and lived there several years. They were the first to raise and sell hops in this part of the county. Day came here from Unadilla about 1824, and lived a little way above Daniel Marr, near where Horace Cady once lived. He moved to the river road about 1836. He had nine children. Barker taught school several terms, and finally went to Ohio. He lived close to the creek above Day.

About 1815 Oliver, Thomas, and Ephraim Burdick, and Samuel Searls came from Kortright, and settled in the woods, northwest of the school-house, all practically on what is known as the George Burdick Estate.

Levi Peck settled what was formerly the Daniel Bugbee place, which is now owned by Charles Pope. Allen Burdick once lived here.



## XII

### Briar Creek

THIS creek was settled early. Samuel Thomas and Elihu(?) Smead were among the first settlers. Ben Wheaton, whose name was closely connected with the creek's history before 1795, lived in log houses at different places—across the road from E. E. Trask's, on the knoll below schoolhouse No. 3, and on the old Carr farm, now owned by Morgan Place. Wheaton's panther story need hardly be told, for it is so well known. Fallen asleep one day on the top of the range of hills south of the river, he was covered over with leaves by a panther, that fetched her young and then pounced upon not a man, but a log, that the wily old hunter had put into his place under the covering. From his vantage-point in a tree, Wheaton shot the panther and her young. Game became scarce as its haunts were encroached upon by settlers, and Wheaton moved to North Franklin.

William King, a Revolutionary soldier, settled, early, back in the woods on the north part of the farm recently purchased by William Hughston from William Brown. Between him and the river road once lived one of the Hornings. William Walden is said to have been the first settler on the place now owned and occupied by Lester D. Gillett.

Eighty years ago Jonathan Burdick was living on the place now owned and occupied by Edgar

Southard. He had a small grist mill near L. Gardner's, which he ran only a few years when the dam gave way. About 1830 Abner Ferry moved hither from the river road, and finally went west. He had no children.

Elijah Ferry, brother of Abner, moved from the eastern part of the town to what is known as the old Ferry place, owned by the late Homer Bird-sall, now occupied by Cassius M. Ferry. He died down the river while rafting. His son Abner then moved from the Ed. Sutton farm on Wheaton creek to this place. Between 1834-44 Abner Ferry moved to Schenevus, renting the place for a few years to Elias Hinsdale. On notification of Ferry's return Hinsdale packed his goods, but on the last night of his stay here the house took fire, and his brother, Norman, was burned to death in trying to save some money from the flames. The Ferrys were from Connecticut.

The first settler on the place next below E. E. Trask's, now owned by Roland Trask, is said to have been Elijah Hinman.

The William Trask place, now owned and occupied by his son, E. E. Trask, was early occupied by Benjamin Walden, who lived down in the lot, west of the present road. Barnard Hawks is said to have once lived here. Near the corner once lived Isaac Gates.

The old Walden farm is the one owned formerly by Theodore Knapp, now Willard Knapp. Here, east on the old road, in 1810 lived old John Walden, who mysteriously disappeared in

1824. Stories were told of lights and spooks seen in his dooryard afterward.

John, son of Timothy, Birdsall settled what is known as the David and Ira Birdsall farm, now owned and occupied by the former.

Truman Trask from Rhode Island settled early where Henry Heliker formerly lived, on the place now owned and occupied by George Bennett. Trask moved hither from the river road, just above the Day farm.

Nahum Smith moved from the river road about 1818 to the place owned and occupied formerly by Edward Smith, now by Carl Smith, son and grandson respectively.

Before 1813 Eben Warner was on the place now owned and occupied by Peter Vanlone. Others here have been Daniel Shepherd and, later, Bennett Chatfield of Connecticut. Michael Birdsall once owned this place.

Isaac Brown, originally from Massachusetts, came, probably from the Butternuts, to the West Branch about 1800. About 1814 he bought the farm now owned and occupied by H. G. Brown, his grandson, and the place across the road now owned and occupied by Wesley Stillwell, from Daniel Knapp and William Potter. The next year he built a carding-machine and a fulling-mill down by the creek, the old foundations of which were destroyed by a flood four years ago. The dam for the saw mill that he also built may still be seen. Brown is said to have learned the "art and mystery of the clothing business" from Phineas Cook. The present house was built about

1825. A store was once kept there on the corner.

The first schoolhouse is this district (No. 3) was of logs. The present and third one was built by William Merithew. Two early teachers were Daniel Shepherd and Perry Angel.

The place now owned by Johnson Wilbur is the old Knapp farm. "Deacon" Daniel Knapp, a Revolutionary soldier, came from Taunton, Mass. about 1793, buying his farm in 1803 from Philip Merithew. In his later years Knapp lived in the village, just west of the Otsdawa. A later occupant of this farm was Simeon Castle, who was originally from Connecticut, and had seven sons. When Knapp first came to town he is said to have lived about forty rods above Brown's, east of the main creek road, where his son Aaron lived afterward.

Philip Merithew, a Revolutionary soldier, came from Rhode Island before 1800, and in 1803 bought his land from John Lawrence of New York. His father, Richard, had been an old sea captain, and his only son was William. The three lie buried under plain stones in the old yard near by, for they were Quakers. The old Merithew farm was later occupied by H. Doolittle, and is now owned by Legrand Castle. The house is one of the oldest on the creek.

In the same year and from the same party the lot next above, No. 124 Morris patent, was bought by "Captain" Levi Austin, who had come from Stockbridge, Mass. about 1792. He was a blacksmith, and his shop stood near the corner of the

roads. He sold fifty acres by the creek to Isaiah Blanchard, a Scotch blacksmith, who had come from Rhode Island to Otsego county in 1806. The latter sold his property to the Shepherds, and moved to Sand Hill. In his later years Austin lived with Philip Merithew, who is said to have been his comrade in the Revolution. He died on the E. E. Trask place.

Robert Potter is said to have come by ox-team and sled with Philip Merithew from Rhode Island. In 1803 he bought for \$155 one hundred acres from Levi Austin. Here he lived his life and was followed by his son Robert. The place is now owned and occupied by Eugene Moore.

Simeon Bliss of Connecticut was an early settler on the place owned and occupied formerly by G. A. Barton, later by W. F. Ward, now by George Belden. He sold the place to Stephen Waite.

It has been said that John Vermilyea, the Revolutionary soldier, moved from the river road to live at the top of the pitch below the creamery, where he finally became insane. The property was early owned by William, brother of Robert. Potter. He reserved twenty-five acres here from his land for his wife Olive, and disappeared to Pennsylvania. With her lived her sister, who after the death of her first husband, John S. Vermilyea, married an Aris.

In 1821 part of the place now owned and occupied by J. L. Goldsmith and the next place above were sold by Oliver H. Everett, a resident owner, to Nathan Birdsall and William Shepherd.

The latter had the Goldsmith place, and was followed by his son Augustus. Across the creek once lived John Morehouse, and in the immediate vicinity, Christopher Green.

The place now owned and occupied by Edward Wyman was originally two places. About eighty years ago Elias Burdick lived on the lower part, which was bought by Jonas Wyman in 1831. Benjamin Vermilyea, a very early settler, bought the upper part from Stephen Scott in 1809, and conveyed it to John S. Vermilyea fifteen years later. This part was bought by William, son of Jonas, Wyman, and the two places were joined. The Vermilyeas were Dutch, and probably from Putnam county.

The farm now owned and occupied by Leslie Smith was early settled by Bateman Walden, who sold, all or a part, to Bates Finch. The place later passed into the hands of Thomas Truman, a Quaker. Truman probably came here from Albany county. He was a descendant of a Thomas Truman, who came from England to Rhode Island over one hundred sixty years ago..

Edward and Solomon Fuller once lived on the place now owned and occupied by George Haines.

Ninety years ago Isaac Benedict was the wealthiest man in town. He is described as "a large, stout man, who built much good stone wall." He owned the next two places, which are now both owned by Morgan Place. He sold the lower one, known later as the William Arnold place, to John Sheldon. His son George sold the upper one to Ed. Carr in 1834; the next occupant was James Emmons, who had

married a daughter of George Carr. Above the cemetery, land for which was given by Benedict, about 1820 was built the so-called "Benedict Academy," which was a schoolhouse about 20x30 feet and of rough boards. Here in 1821 Phineas Emmons, a graduate of Yale, taught thirty pupils. This Emmons lived in a log house on the top of Emmons Hill, and was an eccentric man. He is said to have been the first one to bring white daisies into this region, scattering the seeds over the hills.

Edmond P. Emmons of Rhode Island was an early settler on the place where Ezra Brown formerly lived, which is now owned and occupied by James A. Waite. His crippled brother, Arthur, lived near by, on the old cross-road, east of the schoolhouse. The latter was deprived of his lands by the owners, moved to Puckerhuddle, and was followed on the place by Calvin Fuller, whose brother, Isaiah, built a comb-factory somewhere on the creek about 1820. Fuller sold the place to a Bushnell in 1827, and moved to Flax Island. Farther to east on this old road on the place owned formerly by George Utter, later by David Hurd, now by Morgan Place, lived Elias Hinsdale, who came from Connecticut about 1814. He was a blacksmith, and his anvil is at H. G. Brown's. Whenever there was occasion to go to town, he and a rundlet rode the pony together, but coming back they sometimes parted company.

James Wait, originally from Dartmouth, Massachusetts, came from Saratoga county in the winter of 1807-8, and lived for a short time on the Peace place. He is said to have next settled

in a little clearing made by John Fisk, and here, east of the main creek road and some distance below the corner, he built his log house. This Fisk substituted for him in the War of 1812. The house later occupied by his son Eben, and recently by the latter's widow, Elizabeth, was built by him about 1828. When Calvin Fuller first came from Rheoboth, Massachusetts in the summer of 1819, he settled about one-quarter of a mile north of this house, in the town of Butternuts, with Joseph Pearce and Benjamin Soden, neighbors on the east and west respectively. The Fuller family boarded with John Keysor until their log house was finished. Calvin Fuller had eight children.

Before 1800 Joseph Pearce, probably from Rhode Island, had settled on the next farm, adjoining Butternuts. He was an agent for Gouldsbrow Banyar. His neighbor on the north, over the line, was Peter Farnum, a Connecticut Yankee.

Benjamin Soden was an English Quaker, who moved from the river road to the place now owned by R. G. Cornell and occupied by Fred Scramling, in the town of Butternuts. He bought the place from the original settlers, John and Elisha Fisk from Connecticut.



## XIII

### Churches

THE first Church, Congregational or Presbyterian, was organized 17 September 1805 at the house of Abram Blaklee. Rev. Abner Benedict, who preached a sermon, was chosen Moderator, Ashael Packard and Daniel Knapp, Deacons and Ashael Packard, Clerk. The ten original members were Ashael Packard, David Ogden, Susannah Ogden, Mary Overhizer, Zenas Goodrich, Mary Goodrich, Christian Goodrich, M. Goodrich, Daniel Knapp and Samuel Elwell. For the first two years they doubtless had no stated minister. On 12 August 1807 Rev. William Bull was chosen, and during his service of two years a church was built near the house now occupied by William Van Name. It was about thirty-two feet square with twelve-foot posts and a quadrangular roof. For several years it was only enclosed; the seats were without backs, and the congregation kept themselves warm in winter by the use of footstoves and bricks, until the church was completed in 1816. It stood a rough unpainted structure for many years and was finally torn down. It has been said that this church was put up as a Union Church and was so used. It was nicknamed the "Powder House." Two of the early preachers in its little pulpit up on the wall were Elders Morse and Robinson. The present edifice was commenced in 1830 and dedicated in 1833. The cost of the building was about \$2900. A bell was purchased in 1852. In 1867 the church was

thoroughly repaired and painted. In 1820 the church at Butternuts became divided and sixty-seven united with this church.

The Baptist Church was organized 4 April 1816. Abram Blaklee was the first Treasurer and Deacon, and William Thomas, Clerk. On 15 August 1818 Elder Daniel Robinson was chosen pastor, and he served eight months at a salary of \$50. A church edifice was erected in 1829, and was rebuilt in 1854 at a cost of \$2000. The original members were Abram Blaklee, Benjamin Green, William Thomas, John Birdsall, Phineas St John, Silas P. Hyatt, Eli Pratt, Jerusha Birdsall, Mary Birdsall, Sabra Hunt, Lydia Green and Polly Thomas.

The First Christian Church on the West Branch was organized with thirteen members at the house of Abner Weaver on 10 June 1830 by Elder Joshua Hayward, who was its first preacher. The church building was erected in 1837 at a cost of \$1200. It was remodeled and improved in 1874. The parsonage was built in 1882.

The Second Christian Church, on "Center Brook," was an outgrowth of the first, and was organized by Elders C. E. Peake and Allen Hayward in 1866. The first officers were Ira Pearce and J. C. Emmons, Deacons, J. C. Emmons, Clerk and G. A. Barton, William Bailey and Leander Pearce, Trustees. William Case was the first minister. There was nineteen original members. The church was built in 1870.

The Otego Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in December 1833, included Unadilla, Otego, Oneonta, Laurens, Milford,

Maryland and Sidney. The circuit was divided in 1848. In 1852 under the pastorate of Rev. William Burnside a church was completed at a cost of \$1125. A bell was placed in the tower in 1853. Extensive improvements were made in 1864-66, and again in 1886-91. It has been said that the first class was formed in March 1847 with William T. Broadfoot, Leader, Morgan Lewis, Steward and Henry Halstead, Preacher, and had twenty-eight members. Rev. N. B. Ripley, while pastor here, published an interesting "Historical Sketch of the Otego Methodist Episcopal Church."

The Immanuel Protestant Episcopal Church was organized with ten members at the house of T. R. Austin 10 November 1834, Rev. John F. Messenger, Chairman. Daniel R. Pope and Jesse S. Hewitt were elected Wardens, and T. R. Austin, James Robinson, John S. Rockwell, George F. Austin, Abel Bostwick, E. S. Saunders, James Follett and Henry Austin, Vestrymen. Previous to this organization services were occasionally held at the house of Rev. Mr. Foote. Rev. Mr. Messenger was the first rector, and was followed by Rev. John V. Hughes, who was three times rector here. Ground for the present stone church was broken 13 August 1835 and the building was completed in 1836 at a cost of about \$2500, of which sum \$750 was contributed by Trinity Church in New York City. Extensive improvements were made in 1865-66. In the spring of 1870 a bell was raised in the tower. At various times the Oneonta and the Franklin parishes have been in charge of the Otego rectory. Rev.

George W. Foote, rector in 1866-67, was called to Salt Lake City, where he built the first Protestant Episcopal church in Utah territory.

The Free Will Baptist Church at Otsdawa was organized in the old schoolhouse 5 April 1845 by Rev. S. S. Cady and Deacon E. C. Hodge with twelve members. In the fall of 1854 a church was built at a cost of about \$1200.

The Old School or Primitive Baptist Church was organized 12 January 1857 by Elder St John, who was the first preacher. The first Trustees were Gilbert Bundy, John Smith and G. M. French. The first Clerk was James Bundy. The church was built in 1869.

Previous to the erection of churches services were held in private houses, schoolhouses, barns and even in the woods. Orman T. Crane was an early Baptist preacher, and held services in Mason W. Hughston's barn. Eighty-five years ago the stated preachers in Brown's Schoolhouse were Deacons Thompson, Hodge, and Hayward.

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### Schools in the Village

The first schoolhouse within the limits of the present village stood near where Eli Starr now lives. It was bought by Mason W. Hughston and used as a dwelling house, and was finally torn down in 1862.

The second schoolhouse was built in 1827. This was the "Red Schoolhouse," which stood just below where Tilly Blakely lives. The old schoolhouse was standing in 1846, and was finally incorporated into the house now owned and re-

cently occupied by Alonzo Adams. Some of the early teachers were David Shepherd, Peter Firman, Legrand Scofield, Darwin Clark, who afterward became Governor of Wisconsin, Sarah Carr, Lucy Newland and Delia Gates. At one time there were eighty pupils and only one teacher.

It was decided to divide the district, and the order to this purpose took effect 8 August 1854. The dividing line between the two districts thus formed was about the line of the present Averill street. The schoolhouse in the lower district was built by Abner Ferry and stood near where G. N. Mulkins lives. Three of the first teachers were Ed. Youmans, John Burr and Harriet Hughston. In the upper district school was first held upstairs in the Cole block. J. R. Thorp taught here the winters of 1855 and 1856, and had fifty-eight pupils. The schoolhouse in this district, when built by Abram Rockwell, stood on River street, a little way below the cemetery.

The two districts were consolidated and a schoolhouse built in 1866 on the site of the present one, which was remodeled from the old in 1899. William Birdsall gave the district its bell in 1869. The school was made a High School in 1903.

At different times there have been several Select Schools, as they were termed, in the village. A Mrs. Kent conducted one in a house that stood near where J. E. Truman now lives. A man named Angel ran one in what had been a bar-room of the old Michael Birdsall hotel. A man named Wright conducted another in a room hired on the second floor of the old Saunders Hotel

while it was kept by Crumb. A Miss Marsh taught such a school in the loft of the Presbyterian church. The most aristocratic of these schools was that of Mary Rockwell, whose father built the house now occupied by C. B. Woodruff for her school.

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### Postoffices

The following data were kindly furnished by the Department at Washington—

Hamburg, New York, Otsego county, was established 1 January 1811, with Samuel Root as postmaster. The name of the office was changed to Huntsville 30 May 1822, and Daniel Lawrence was appointed postmaster. Huntsville was changed to Otego, date not given, but Daniel Lawrence was continued postmaster.

Otsdawa, same county and state, was established 3 January 1833, with Norman Phillips as postmaster. The office was discontinued 19 July 1906.

Center Brook, same county and state, was established 16 March 1854, with John W. Pearce as postmaster. The office was discontinued 24 August 1859.

Ayre, same county and state, was established 26 April 1887, with William Harris as postmaster. The office was discontinued 11 June 1895.

A century ago mail facilities were poor. The inhabitants went to Laurens, Unadilla or the nearest postoffice for their letters, paying 6 1-4, 12 1-2, 18 3-4 or 25 cents postage on each, according to the distance. There were no stamps.

Newspapers were brought every Friday by post-riders to the houses. The Cooperstown Federalist and Watchman were the only ones. In 1810 Stephen Cook had been carrying papers about one year. In 1813 he started on horseback for Connecticut to get some parts for clocks that he had made, and was never heard of afterward. After a few months John Winton began bringing the papers, and he and his son Barlow carried them for a long time. Then a Mr. Griffith was the carrier. Under the administration of James Madison there were established Hamburg postoffice in the eastern part of Unadilla, Oneonta postoffice in the southern part of Milford, and a postroute from Binghamton to Cooperstown. In 1820 mail was carried once a week. In 1827 the postoffice was in the store of T. R. Austin, postmaster. In 1842 Ezra R. Brewer was postmaster, and the office was in the store now occupied by Glen Poole. The box was about three feet square, and contained twenty-six small letter boxes. The present postmaster is A. D. Annable, whose interesting sketch of the Otego postoffice appeared in the Rural Times of 3 April 1907.

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### River Bridges

At the village—

The first bridge was built soon after 1805 by the citizens of Unadilla and Franklin, and was called Hunt's Bridge. It was an old-fashioned, open, wooden bridge put up on bents, and was free. It crossed the river over by the "gulf," the road turning off to it over the flat just below

the railroad crossing. On the other side the road led from the "gulf" diagonally up Franklin Mountain, where traces of it can yet be seen from the village. This bridge fell down of its own weight in the summer of 1832.

The next bridge was built by a stock company formed in the vicinity with T. R. Austin as a promoter, in 1833. It was an open bridge on the same site as the present one, and its old mud sills could, at least a short time since, be seen. The toll was about two or three cents for a footman, six cents for a horse and wagon and ten cents to a shilling for a team. Those who crossed often commuted at \$2-3 per year. The following may be of interest:

"This may certify that Mason W. Hughston is entitled to pass the Otego Village Toll Bridge until the first day of March next with his own team or any of his family living with him, in the ordinary course of his business and not otherwise, the said Hughston having commuted for the same. Jas. Follett, Treas. Otego March 7, 1835."

The toll-house stood where Lewis Reddington's brick house stands; some of the toll-keepers were widows Birdsall, Houck and Bedford. On 4 March 1845 the town "resolved that the Otego Bridge Co. charter be not extended," but they seem to have continued taking toll. The bridge was badly battered by the ice in the springs of 1853 and 1854, and was finally taken down by Abram Rockwell in the winter of 1855-56.

Orrin Hubbell, and then Bethuel Fuller, ran a ferry there until the next and third bridge was



built in the fall of 1857, Harvey Baker having the stone-work and Nelson A. Brock, the wood-work. This bridge was blown off by a high wind in the latter part of May 1866.

Until the next bridge was built the river was forded at the rift, and later, a temporary pontoon bridge was thrown across just above the site of the bridge. This, the fourth and last wooden bridge, was built on the same piers by a certain Murry in the fall of 1866. It was a free, covered bridge, and was replaced by the present iron structure in the summer of 1901.

A course was surveyed across the river near Flax Island creek in 1831, but no road was laid nor bridge built.

Near Hale's—

The first bridge here was built shortly before 1830. It crossed the river just below the large island belonging to the Northup farm, at the place where Henry Shepherd had a ferry before 1797; the bridge itself is called Shepherd's Ferry. It was taken off by the ice in a few years.

In 1835 the second bridge was built some distance below the above spot by Russell Murry. This bridge was rebuilt in 1846 by Albert and Horatio Merrick at a cost of \$200. It was standing in 1857, but was gone by 1860. It stood condemned for several years. All the bridges here were free.

### Newspapers

The first newspaper, the Otego Literary Record, was started by Owen and Tompkins in September

1868. The first printing office was in the Cole Block. Orwen soon became the sole one interested. The name was changed to the Otego Record, and at different times during 1872 had at least three publishers, Alpheus S. Foote, O. B. Ireland and a man named Bunnell. In August 1872 G. A. Dodge started the Otego Times, a Greely paper, in opposition to the Record, that favored Grant. In January 1873 Dodge purchased the Record and consolidated the two papers under the name of the Otego Times and Record. Thomas M. Cash was given editorial charge. Dodge was at the same time editor of the Home and Abroad at Unadilla, into which the Otego Times and Record was absorbed in January, 1874.

During 1873 Cash published the details of a certain scandal in town, and in April 1874 was arrested by a United States Deputy Marshall for unlawful use of the mails. He escaped conviction. He disappeared from Otego, and many years afterward died on a vessel off the coast of California and was buried at sea.

In April 1878 B. H. Gadsby of Gilbertsville started the Otego Gazette, which in January 1879 was absorbed in the Gilbertsville Journal.

In 1881 A F. Flummerfelt and W. H. Putnam started the Susquehanna Wave. Flummerfelt later became the sole editor. V. S. Fuller bought the paper in April 1886, and changed the name to the Otego Times. Fuller changed the name to the Rural Times in 1889, and under this name edits and publishes it now.

## XIV

### Otego's Old Soldiers

IT is practically impossible to get an absolutely correct list of the soldiers and the sailors of the Revolution and of the War of 1812. Much valuable information might be gleaned by patient search among the records at Washington. The records of the Civil War and of the War with Spain are easily available. The two following lists do not claim to be either complete or free from error.

#### Revolutionary War

John Armstrong (d. 20 Mr. 1853, ae. 96; buried in the Pope yard on the East Branch)

General(?) Bates

John Boldman—enlisted in Virginia.

Elisha Bundy (b. 6 Oct. 1760—d. 1824 or '25; Bundysburg, Ohio)

Peleg Burdick (d. 23 Jun. 1836, ae. 77; Carr Yard on West Branch)—was on a prison ship.

Benjamin Edson (d. 1 Jly. 1843, ae. 84; in the yard by the church on the West Branch)—is said to have been a drummer.

Samuel Fisk—was at Stony Point.

John French

Benjamin Howe (d. ae. 70; buried in the Gates yard)

Samuel Hyatt (d. 14 Oct. 1831, ae. 72; Pope yard)—was at Stony Point.

William King (said to be buried under a plain stone in the yard on the Earle Root place)—is said to have been a trumpeter.

Daniel Knapp (d. 21 Apr. 1836, ae. 83; Presbyterian yard in the village)

John Lamb

Joseph Marr (in the yard on Flax Island is a stone inscribed, "James Marr, d. 11 Aug. 1824, ae. 82;" it may be this man, for Jas. and Jos. are easily confused in script.)

Philip Merithew—was a Quaker, and a plain stone marks his grave in the old Merithew yard on Briar creek.

Joseph Northrup, Sr. (d. 23 Jan. 1842, ae. 87; said to be buried on the place of Alonzo Judd)—was in the Sugar House prison in New York.

Daniel Ogden—was 2nd Lieut. in Colonel Harper's regiment; he entered the Revolution 4 April 1777 and served till the end of the war.

David Ogden—(d. 30 Oct. 1840, ae. 76; Treadwell, N. Y.)—see Chapter VI.

John Ogden

Asahel Packard (d. 26 Jun. 1846, ae. 83; in the Episcopal yard at Unadilla)—enlisted 14 Sept. 1781, and served two months and three days as drummer in the Vermont militia.

Isaac Quackenbush (Riverside yard at Oneonta).

David Smith (d. 20 May 1848, ae. 90; Presbyterian yard in the village)

John Snouse—was among the Indians.

Moses Stevens (said to be buried either by the

"Pines" on what is known as the James Cole place, or in the poor yard at Coopers-town)

John Taylor—escaped from a British prison ship and swam three miles at night.

Captain Ezekiel Tracy (d. 24 Feb. 1820, ae. 66; farm of Alonzo Judd)—commanded a company at the Battle of Bennington.

John Vermilyea

John Wattles

Joseph Youngs (d. 28 Dec. 1842, ae. 82; Wheeler yard)

Doubtful are Captain Levi Austin; William French (d. 15 Aug. 1838, at 94; at or near Bundysburg, Ohio); John King Hatheway (under a plain stone in the yard just below Otsdawa, called the Cook cemetery).

#### War of 1812

Thurston Brown (buried somewhere near Lockport, N. Y.)

William Brown (d. 28 May 1844, ae. 77; in the Brown yard on the West Branch)—was in a Rhode Island regiment.

Ephraim Burdick (d. 1871, ae. 79)

Oliver Burdick (d. 10 Oct. 1872, ae. 84)

Thomas Burdick (d. ae. 75)—the three Burdicks are all buried in the yard on Flax Island.

Ethan Burdick (d. 27 July 1867, ae. 76; Carr yard on West Branch)

Dennis Davis

Elam Edson (d. ae. 89; said to be buried at Cherry Creek, N. Y.)

Harmon Foote

Abel French (d. 1861, ae. 77; buried in the Bundy yard)

Jeremiah French (d. 7 Mr. 1830, ae. 61; Presbyterian yard in the village)

Calvin Fuller (d. 1868, ae. 86; in the yard on Briar Creek)—was stationed at Martha's Vineyard. In his later years he drew a land warrant for 160 acres of government land.

Levi Hale (d. 16 Aug. 1866, ae. 74; Evergreen yard in the village)—was stationed at New York.

John A. Hodge—was stationed at Sackett's Harbor.

Samuel Martin (d. 11 Oct. 1864, ae. 72; Presbyterian yard in the village)

George T. Northup (b. 1784—d. 1871; Presbyterian yard in the village)

John Northup

Samuel Northup (d. 16 Nov. 1819, ae. 63; farm of Alonzo Judd)

David Ogden—see first list.

Abel Packard

Jacob Quackenbush (d. 26 Aug. 1846, ae. 53; buried in the yard on the Orlando Quackenbush place)—was stationed at New York.

Horace Phelps

Thomas Weaver (d. ae. 80; said to be buried at Cherry Creek, N. Y.)

John Youngs (d. 20 Feb. 1823, ae. 39; in the Wheeler yard)

Doubtful are Cyrus Bates (originally from Vermont, came to Otego in 1832, and is buried somewhere on the West Branch; he may be the "General Bates" in the list of the Revolution); Ben-

jamin Shepherd (b. 1775—d. 1852; in the Presbyterian yard in the village—is said to have commanded the company of which Abel Packard was a member); Captain Ezekiel Tracy, who may have been in both wars.

In 1812 a regiment of militia was drafted in Otsego county, and Otego, Unadilla and Butternuts were required to furnish one company. Thurston Brown was drafted in September of that year, and joined the company at Morris. He was Orderly Sergeant, and was later promoted to Captain. He was in the engagement under General Van Rensselaer, where he was taken prisoner, and was sent home in December of the same year on parole.

Otsego county, under the old regime of infantry organization, was in the 16th Division, 2nd Brigade. Jacob Morris was the first Major-General. The "trainings" were social events. General training was held near the village on the flat above the Otsdawa bridge, east of the creek, and the troopers wore British uniforms. At times practical jokes were carried too far. A certain Captain Walton was once accidentally killed at a training. Company training was often held on the flat west of Mrs. Lucinda Northup's house. Aaron Brimmer and Joseph Northup, Jr., were two of the captains and some of the names on the roll were Samuel Cuyle, John Ryder, Benjamin Pender, Josiah Goodrich, Levi Han, John Rathbun and Steven Bradley.

## XV

### Miscellaneous

THE village at different periods:

1822—"The Village of Hamburgh has a Post-office of the same name, 24 dwellings, 2 mills, 2 stores, a schoolhouse, and a variety of mechanics' shops, a busy thriving little place founded in 1810. The Postoffice will probably soon take the name of the town (Huntsville), and why not the village also?"

1835—Three taverns, three stores, three churches, two blacksmith shops, a grist mill, tannery, a schoolhouse, and about thirty-five dwellings.

1842—Three taverns, four stores, three churches, two blacksmith shops, four other shops, two doctors, sixty-five buildings and about 300 inhabitants. Between 1842 and 1889 one hundred fifteen buildings were erected. In 1842 Otsdawa had one store, a tannery, a fulling mill, two saw-mills, and 15-20 dwellings.

1872—Two taverns, seven stores, five churches, a sash and blind factory and about 600 inhabitants. Otsdawa had one church, one store, a grist and sawmill, a wagon shop, a blacksmith shop and about 100 inhabitants.

The first lawyer in town is said to have been Benjamin Estes.

The first physician was John Wright. Other early doctors were Root, Hewett and Whitmarsh.



The Otsego County Medical Society was organized in 1806, and the following were members from Otego up to 1850: 1807 David Bliss; 1828 James Tripp; 1829 Bradley Blakeslee; 1834 E. S. Saunders; 1839 A. L. Head; 1844 Isaac Fairchild.

Two early marriages were: Joseph Northup, Jr., and Polly Goodrich on 9 August 1807; James Bundy and Polly Overhizer on 17 January 1809.

The first birth was probably in the family of the Ogdens. Among early births were Rebecca Birdsall, daughter of Timothy, in 1791; Samuel Martin, son of Frederick, on 19 September 1792; Polly Blaklee, daughter of Abram, in 1801.

The first death of which any authentic record has been found was that of John Weaver, who died in 1800.

The first tannery in town is said to have been down under the bank behind the house now owned and occupied by Thomas Redding. There were only two or three vats. Before 1822 Chandler Mann had started a small tannery on what is now the upper part of the farm of Webster Birdsall. In that year Samuel Goddard of Maryland, N. Y., bought the business, built the dam, which still remains, and continued the tannery till 1866.

The Citizens' Agricultural Society was organized 6 January 1869 "for the improvement of agriculture in its various branches." Officers and directors were elected; twelve acres of land were leased for seven years; and the grounds were surrounded by a twelve-foot board fence.

A half-mile track was graded, the necessary pens, stalls and the like were constructed, and the first fair was held 9-10 September 1869. When the lease expired, the society was reorganized, and the grounds were purchased. The last fair was in 1885. The society was dissolved the following year. The fair grounds were at the head of Fair street, on land now owned by Harvey Hunt.

The Albany and Susquehanna Railroad was opened to Otego 23 January 1866. The town was bonded by Timothy Sheldon, Railroad Commissioner, for \$70,000. The road was leased in 1870 by the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company for a term of ninety-nine years.

The present Otego House was built by William Sliter in the summer following the burning of the old Hunt Hotel in the big fire on 15 April 1877.

The Susquehanna House was modeled from T. R. Austin's dwelling by Isaac Wheeler in 1852. Wheeler sold it to Adam Horton, who made extensive changes. A later owner was Ely Dean.

The Breffle Hotel was modeled by Alfred Breffle from the old Richard Holiday house, and opened by him in 1894.

The Hotel Francis was built by Dwight Strong about 1872 for a sort of store. Fred. H. Fowler was the first to keep a hotel here. Edward Brady modeled it into its present form in 1891.

The following are a few of the men of Otego who became prominent citizens of the State: Ran-

som Hunt, member of the Constitutional Convention of 1821; John Blakely, Member of Assembly from Otsego in 1819, '21, '22, and '24; Harvey Hunt, Member of Assembly from Otsego in 1843, and in the New York Custom House during the administration of James Buchanan; Ebenezer Blakely, Member of Assembly from Otsego in 1846, State Senator in 1854, a Presidential Elector in 1864, and State Assessor; Dr. E. S. Saunders, Member of Assembly from Otsego in 1848.

There are over thirty burial-places in this town. The first grave in the Evergreen Cemetery was in what is called the "old part," and was dug for Nancy Maria, daughter of Mason W. Hughston, in 1832. There are said to be three Revolutionary soldiers buried under plain stones in the old Merithew yard on Briar creek. One of them (probably Philip Merithew), when over ninety years old, was offered a pension of \$3,000 by the Government, which he refused because he thought it was the price of blood, saying, "I fought for liberty, not for money."

The Otego Water Company was formed in 1889, and sold its plant to the village in 1900. The reservoir is claimed to have an elevation of 180 feet, producing a pressure of 75 pounds to the square inch.

The Health Board was formed in 1882.

The village was lighted by oil lamps in 1892; by electricity in 1907.

The Bowe Casket Company, Ltd., began its

building in the fall of 1887 and completed it within a year. Operations ceased in December 1904. On an average twenty-five men were here employed.

The Opera House Block was built by V. S. Fuller in 1897.

The Otego Grange (No. 788) was organized 12 April 1894.

The Otego Hose Company No. 1 was first organized 11 November 1889.

The Otego Hook and Ladder Company was organized in 1895.

The Fire Department building was erected in 1900.

The Otego Union Lodge, F. & A. M., No. 282, was organized 23 October 1852 with the following officers: Cornelius Brink, Master; A. Light, Sr. Warden; C. H. Green, Jr. Warden; Harvey Hunt, Secretary; C. Thompson, Treasurer; Oliver Burdick, Sr. Deacon. The first meetings were held at the house of Levi French. During the Anti-Mason movement meetings were held secretly in the house that stands on the east side of Main street, the second one north from Church street.

The Otego Old Boys' Club was organized 4 July 1904 through the efforts of J. B. Hunt.

A copy of the minutes of the first town meeting of the Town of Huntsville:

"At the first town meeting in the town of Huntsville held at the house of Ransom Hunt, April 30, 1822, in conformity to an act passed April

12, 1822, for the erection of the said town of Huntsville, which act was read at the opening of the meeting by Daniel Weller, Justice of the Peace—

Daniel Lawrence was then chosen Secretary for the meeting, and was sworn to keep a true record of their proceedings, which are as follows (Viz.)

Voted that Abraham Blakslee and Peter Schremling assist the Justice of the peace in canvassing the votes which shall be received at this meeting.

Voted that no more than three assessors be elected at this meeting—

The following officers were then elected (Viz.)

Daniel Weller—Supervisor

Daniel Lawrence—Town Clerk

Benjamin Shepherd

Joseph Northup, Jn.

Rowland Carr

} Assessors

John A. Hodge—Collector

Michael Birdsall

Peter Schremling

} Overseers of  
the Poor

Andrew Hodge

Nathan Birdsall

John Smith

} Coms. of  
Highways

Russell Hunt

John A. Hodge

Nahum Smith

} Coms. of  
Common

William Benedict

Parley Pember

Daniel Shepherd

} Inspectors  
of  
Schools

John A. Hodge—Constable

Voted that only one constable be elected.

Michael Birdsall—Pound Master

Isaac Benedict	}	Fence Viewers
Benjamin Shepherd		
Sylvester Goodrich		

Isaac Wolfe

Abraham Wolfe

Garrit Quackenbush

Coenradt Wiles

Russell Blakslee

Jedadiah Tracy

Peter Bundy, Jr.

Nathan Birdsall

Michael Birdsall

Stephen Ford

Ebenezer Knapp

Chester Lamb

Joseph B. Pearce

Elias Hinsdale

William Shepherd

Nahum Smith

Truman Trask

Daniel Knap

Levi B. Packard

Solomon Fuller

Overseers  
of  
Highways

Voted that the Collector shall collect the town taxes for three cents on the dollar—

Voted that the Inspectors of Schools shall be allowed by this town fifty cents per day for their services while visiting schools and inspecting teachers—

Voted that the Inspectors shall visit each school in this town twice and twice only—

Voted that four fence viewers be elected—

Voted that one Pound Master be elected—

Voted that any person who shall knowingly suffer a ram to run at large between the 10th. Sept. & 20th. Nov. shall be liable to pay for every such offence the sum of three dollars—

Voted that swine shall not be free comeners unless ringed and yoked—

Voted to reconsider the vote appointing Russell Blakslee an overseer of Highways—

Meeting adjourned to the first Tuesday in March next at the same place. Recorded by me, Daniel Lawrence, Town Clerk.”

## XVI

### Pioneer Experiences

EVEN in 1819 New York state was the "Far West, the Land of Promise." It took eighteen days to come from Massachusetts to Otego. More than thirty years before the above date Peter Bundy came; and he is a type of those early settlers, who, with ox-team or on foot, braved a howling wilderness to subdue land covered by primeval forest. He left home in winter, and with some neighbors started for Otego. On a wood-shod sled drawn by a small yoke of oxen he brought his all—his wife and five small children, a few utensils, a little bedding, and a part of a barrel of pork for food, the brine of which was afterward boiled down for the salt. The little company traveled slowly toward the valley of the Charlotte, having to cut their way a portion of the journey. The oxen fed on the browse, and the prospective settlers camped out in the woods many nights, building large fires to protect themselves from the cold. How long they journeyed is not known, but their first acts were the acts of any settler in a new country—the building of a cabin, the making of a clearing and the planting of some corn. A home was made and the settler had begun his struggle.

The usual log house was about 20x30 feet, of two rooms, with slab roof and rough board floor. There was no metal in its construction. The single chimney, fireplace and partition were of stone.



The hinges of the door were of leather. Greased white paper was used in the windows if they existed. Many a lesson in early architecture was learned from the Indians. Framed buildings, especially barns, were a novelty. The first frame house in town was probably the one built by Abram Blaklee. On the south side of the river John Brimmer's frame house was for a long time the only one of its kind on the road. The flint and tinder-box were the only means of getting a fire, and many old people can still well remember with what astonishment they saw matches used. A grease-soaked rag floating in a dish of grease and lighted, antedated the candle and the oil lamp. This means of illumination was called a "snogin," a "slut" or a "witch."

There were few, or no, means of procuring money to pay for lots and taxes by the first settlers, except through the proceeds of lumbering on the Susquehanna. The timber was swept from the land and run down the river to Baltimore, or over the hill to Walton and down the Delaware. The receipts were a meagre compensation for the labor and risks. The families of Elisha Bundy, Wyrarn French and Willard Cheney were associated in this business. In 1813 they started two rafts containing about 50,000 feet of lumber and 75,000 shingles for Harrisburg with Casper Overhizer, pilot. The rafts suffered various accidents, the losses were heavy, and the three families finally moved west. The following receipt may be of interest:

"Rec'd of David S. Bundy for Peter  
Bundy fourteen Dollars and fifty cents,

it being in full for running down the river. Washington, April 17, 1824.

William Rathbun."

About 1819 T. R. Austin erected a potash factory, or ashery, on Briar creek near the creamery. He purchased ashes at twelve cents per bushel in trade at his store, where maple sugar at six cents per pound could also be sold. He built another factory on the south side of the river near the corner of the Franklin and the river roads. Such enterprises helped to solve the money problem.

The early settlers had to raise their own provisions, and there was much privation, suffering and even starvation in the early years. "Aunt Beersheba," widow of Peter Bundy, said that for several weeks after they came, the family lived on maple-sugar. Henry Scramling, on the Van Woert farm in Oneonta, sowed ten acres of peas with the intention of supplying with food the hungry settlers, who were crowding in large numbers into the woods for settlement. He said, "Dey sall haf dem free;" and they were all picked clean. Many of those who consumed the green peas lived several miles away. There were a few instances of boiling potato tops and pea vines for the juice. In one case the women went into a standing field of rye and cut the ripest heads, which they dried and boiled to keep the family alive. The shad fishing every spring was a great relief. In 1817 many suffered from want of bread.

Mills were of vast importance. In 1780 the nearest mill was on the Mohawk, the one at Unadilla having been burned by Butler's army.

Even when Ransom Hunt came there were no mills nearer than fifteen miles and no stores nearer than ten miles. For some years the first settlers carried their grain to Cooperstown by canoe or dugout (the Susquehanna was formerly more navigable); later, by wood-shod sled to a mill erected on a branch of the Charlotte. The round trip took to Cooperstown four, to the mill on the Charlotte three days. Neighbors combined, each one in turn carrying for the others. The first grist mill in town was erected by Ransom Hunt.

Before the advent of stores, and especially of the railroad, the farmers would often club together and take their grain to Catskill, Albany or some other market. Nahum Smith and Leonard Morey kept the first store in town in a two-storied frame building that stood about where stands the Bowe block. When T. R. Austin first came, he occupied this store; in about 1812 he built a new store directly across the street which is now used by the postoffice. The old Smith and Morey store was later used as a wagonshop by Nathaniel Spaulding; it was then moved down near the depot where it was used by Martin Eckert as a sash and blind factory, and was finally incorporated into the feedstore that stood near the coal-bins and was burned in 1896. Before 1817 Daniel Lawrence was merchant in town and had built the store where Glen Poole trades. The early settlers made their own shoes, and raised their own wool, from which they made all their own clothing. Later, carding-machines and fulling-mills flourished. The first cloth-dress-

ing establishment in town was built by Phineas Cook at Otsdawa in 1801.

The early settlers had good hunting. Godfrey Calder saw deer and bear; and there is said to have been a deer-lick by a salt spring on Flax Island creek. In 1811 John Boldman killed a bear, cut it up and divided it among his neighbors. During the Revolution beasts of prey had increased and the straggling Indians were welcomed. Calvin Fuller was attacked one night by a panther near his house on Flax Island creek. Webster Birdsall's flat was once a hemlock swamp and has been described as a veritable "wolf hole." One winter's night a pack chased Stephen Northup down Franklin Mountain. The wolves were very troublesome and offers of bounties are recorded in the early town records. In 1797 Unadilla offered forty shillings for every wolf's scalp. Otego voted in 1796 five pounds, in 1800 \$5, in 1801 \$7, and in 1802 \$10 for the scalp of every wolf caught within the town.

There were close ties of friendship among the early settlers. Social gatherings were many, and in the early years a common treat was potatoes, roasted in the embers of the fireplace and eaten with salt. "Bees" of all kinds were popular. There were logging, chopping and wood-hauling bees, husking and dung-bees, spinning, quilting and apple-paring bees, and others. There was one dung-bee in town that degenerated into a brawl and ended in a tragedy. It was on the place of John Christian, or of John Snouse—the present places of R. A. Wykes, or of W. H. Baker. Several versions of the story are given; but they all

agree in that, after the work was done, the men repaired to the grass-plot in front of the house, where a general drunken melee took place in which John Christian lost his life. House-raising were events in which the whole neighborhood participated. A raising usually lasted from one to six o'clock of an afternoon, requiring a dozen or more men and several gallons of whiskey. In 1819 the nearest distilleries were Shepherd's on the "Plains," and Shaw's at "Bull Dog." There have been at least five distilleries in this town at various times. In 1810 one stood in the village where is Mrs. Mary Rathbun's house. It was owned by T. R. Austin and run by Henry Decker with the assistance of old Joseph Northup; the yard, where the cattle and hogs were fattened, is now her garden. Another was in the Otsdawa ravine above the village. The other three were later—one on W. A. Secor's on the east side of the road; another on the south side of the river opposite the house on the old Cyrus Hunt place; the third under the knoll back of Thomas Redding's house. This last distillery was finally burned. At that time some of the pigs that were being fattened on the "slop" got loose and ran up among the hills, where they became wild and were hunted. Whiskey cost 18-25 cents per gallon, or two gallons for a bushel of wheat or rye. It was served on all occasions, the slogan being, "No whiskey, no work."

The times that tried the pioneers are happily past. They conquered a new and savage country for the generations that were to follow. To-day there are finer foods to eat and more sober

liquids to drink, but there are no stauncher hearts, no sturdier frames, no better men. Not one was perfect. All were human. And as they lived they died—brave men.

The following are some entries from an old day-book of T. R. Austin, dated 1811-12:

	shillings and pence	dollars and cents
Dan. Christian		
For 1 Qt. Molasses	2/	
1-2' B. Tea	2/	.50
Richd. Horning		
For 1-2' Powder	5/	
1 Violin String	1/	.75
Benj. Vermilyea		
For 1 1-4 yd. Fulld. Cloth	14/9	
2 Sks. Silk	/8	
1-2' Tobc.	1/	
8 Buttons	/8	
Bitters	1/	2.26
Benj. Shepherd		
For 1 pt. oil	1/6	
1-2 Quire Paper	1/	
2 qts. Rum	6/	1.07
Wm. French		
For 1-4' Snuff	1/	
1-4' Ginger	/6	.19
Fredk. Martin		
For 1-2' Coffee	1/3	.16

## Cyporon Tracy

For 1 p. Sheep Shears	6/	
2 bush. Corn	14/	
1-2' Raisins	/9	
1-2' B. Tea	2/	
Bitters	/10	
	<hr/>	
	23/7	2.92

## James French

For 1 pap. Onion Seed	1/6	
1 " Carrot	/6	
1 Hair Comb	1/	
Whiskey	/6	.44

## Elijah Fuller

For 3 Bush. Oats	9/	
2 Qts. Rum	5/	1.75

## Robt. Rathbone

For 6 plates	4/6	.56
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## Peter Bovee

For 1 Hat 10/ Bitter /6	10/6	1.31
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## Wheeler French

For 1' Nails	1/2	
1 Nail Hammer	3/	.52

## Conrad Wiles

For 1 Gall. Rum	9/	
1 doz. Buttons	1/	1.25

## Peter Schramling

For 2 1-4 yds. Check 6/	13/6	
1 Pail 4/ Bitters /6	4/6	
1-2' Tobc.	1/	
	<hr/>	
	19/	2.37

The following from another old book may be of interest:

The Town of Huntsville, Debtor—

June the 6, 1822.

Met together to divide our assessment District at Ransom Hunt's	\$0.62 1/2
Met at Ransom Hunt's and put up our Notifications on the 15 of June.	\$0.62 1/2
Met on the 25 of June to review our assessment roll	\$0.62 1/2
Two days assessing	\$2.50
Met at Ransom Hunt's and put up our notifications for Election	\$0.62 1/2
For attending Election three days	\$3.75



## XVII

### Legends and Stories

ONCE upon a time in this valley lived a beautiful Indian maiden named Te-go-wa-ha, "sunny eyes." Her lover was of a tribe living farther down the river. Her father was an enemy of his people. One day the stern old chief surprised them together on "Lover's Rocks" where they were wont to meet in secret. With an arrow he shot and killed the young brave. The girl, wild with grief and anger, threw herself off the rocks to death below. The old chief became insane and for years wandered about this region, calling for his daughter, "O Tego," "O Tego," and died with this name on his lips. Another version of the story is that the lover's name was Te-go, and as the girl threw herself off the rocks, she cried, "O Tego." Still another version is that the old chief's name was Te-go-wa-ha and his daughter's Ots-da-wa. When he shot, he missed the lover and killed his daughter Ots-da-wa. But this leaves the story to be completed by some fertile brain; for what did the old chief do to the lover then?

A member of a band of Delawares, who were returning from a hunting expedition in the vicinity of Otsego Lake, once seized and carried off a girl of one of the tribes of the Five Nations. The two hid for the night on old Flax Island. The brave went to reconnoitre. On his return, as

his canoe grated on the island, he straightened up to leap upon the land, and was shot by some members of the girl's tribe, who had discovered their retreat. The Indian fell into the deep water off the island, and the girl leaped in after him. Both were drowned, and their bones lie somewhere on the bottom of the river.

Tradition says that Otego was the scene of the cold-blooded murder of the beautiful and lovely daughter of Cog-no-wa-no, chief of the powerful and haughty tribe of Indians, whose hunting and fishing grounds lay along this section of the Susquehanna.

This vicinity, like many another, is famous for Indian tradition of valuable mines of gold, silver and lead, the latter two of remarkable purity. Silver in large quantities is thought to be in the range of hills between the Otego and the Otsego creeks. Daniel Strait is said to have once found enough lead here to make some bullets. It is claimed that the Indians chopped off the lead in their mines with their tomahawks, so pure was it. This strengthens the belief that the Indians cached their lead. An Indian once borrowed a kettle from Phinas St. John, and brought it back filled with "bullet metal." An Indian, named George Kindness, once stayed several days with John Hyatt, and he said that he and some others of his tribe were looking for lead in the hills. Tradition says that along the ridge between the East Branch and Mill creek ran a trail to the Mohawk, and that near it the Indians secreted some treasure taken at Cherry Valley.

There is said to have been a well marked trail

from near the head of Decker's mill-pond above Otsdawa, following a little spring stream southwest, to a point near the barn on the place now occupied by Bennett Weatherly. Julius Hatheway and some other boys, who were going to school near by, once stumbled upon the cave and mine to which the trail led. They went in in single file for some distance until the boy in the lead called to back out, for he could "see his eyes." When the older people heard about it, a search was organized under the boys' guidance, but no trace could be found.

In the Otsdawa ravine above the village there is a cave among the rocks on the east side of the creek, about which many tales have been spun. Some claim that it is a big subterranean chamber with another entrance on Mill creek, and that it contains the bones and the treasure of a prehistoric people. Deep in S. S. Crandall's flat is said to be a vein of gold. When John Winn lived there, a man and a boy once stayed over night at his house. The next morning the man told Winn that his boy could see things under the ground, and that he saw salt in his flat. The presence of salt here is possible, for this vicinity is within range of the Onondaga salt belt. Stories are told of deer-licks. There was once a salt-spring near the river, east of the Borden ice-houses, and another near the village, east of the Otsdawa. A man named Hopkins and an Indian were once hunting somewhere on the north side of the river. They ran short of lead, and the Indian suddenly disappear, returning soon with an abundant supply. The Indians once took one of

the Vanwoert family, after blindfolding and leading him by a circuitous route, to a lead mine where the metal was in a pure state.

Many stories are told of Dumpling Hill. Near a barn that once stood on its slope were four basswood trees, standing in the form of a square, into whose bark moccasins had been cut. Its summit was supposed to be an Indian outlook, where there was a pine with a grafted spruce top. A ledge of rocks forms a cave where Indian treasure was supposed to be buried. The cave was once found and entered by Charles Mericle, Ira Bovie and Jake Rowe, but now is lost. Years ago an old Indian was in the habit of visiting John Brimmer, and sitting on his steps of a summer evening would point to the hill and tell of great and hidden wealth. Veins of coal have been found here. Adam and Baltus Simmons once dug up some "ore" on the hill and had it assayed at Albany. While a well was being dug on the Quackenbush farm, "silver" was struck, which disappeared as soon as a word was spoken. William Springs, while he was held captive by the Indians, was once blindfolded and taken by them to a cave on Dumpling Hill, in which there was a silver mine. He said that the mouth of the cave was covered with flat stones. After the Revolution the Indians frequented the hill, crossing the river to it late in the afternoon. Theodore Hunt remembers seeing them walking back and forth along its ledges with torches in the night. David Blakely, who lived across the river, told of seeing a flame sixty feet high shooting out of the hill one morning. The hill used

to "roar," bringing people, even from the village, to listen and to wonder; it was supposed to be due to gases burning in a mine. The legends and the stories of the hill had a great influence upon the crazed mind of Jake Rowe, a poor boy brought up by John Brimmer. Standing in the road at its foot he would hurl his testament into the air and cry, "Dumpling Hill, dissolve!"

Before 1800 Daniel and John Ogden and Uriah White spent considerable time and labor digging on the hill north of Dumpling. They supposed that there was a mine on it. Along the height of land south of the river there is said to have been an Indian trail, which was afterward marked by a state road. A white man once surprised an Indian filling his belt with lead on the old Perez Swift farm, recently occupied by Lucius Chase. The Indian vowed that thereafter his spirit would haunt the place to lead or frighten all palefaces from the mine.

On the north side of the river coal was once found in the driving of a well on the place of Leslie Palmer. Among the rocks north of the road on the farm of John Leonard is said to be an Indian lead mine; down on the flat near a little run of water treasure is supposed to have once been buried.

An Indian once came to Ransom Hunt's hotel and stayed several days, going away in the morning and not returning till evening. One morning he waited until all the loungers had left the bar-room and then asked Hunt whether he remembered where there had been a pond down on the flat near the Borden ice-houses. On learning

that he did, the Indian asked whether he would show him the place. Hunt went with him and pointed out the spot. The Indian then asked whether a large pine once stood near, and he was shown where that had been. The Indian with these two points established, without another word started in a straight line over the hill west of Thomas Redding's house. Whither did he go, and what was his quest?

Near a small run of water on the place of B. C. Hatheway once stood a huge pine, into whose bark had been cut the face of an Indian chief. Several years after the tree had been cut down, an Indian appeared and asked after this tree. He was shown its stump. He disappeared, and not long afterward a portion of a wooden box was found that had been dug up from the bottom of the little stream.

Many witch stories were current in early time. Witches would braid horses' manes, cross the river near the upper railroad bridge in eggshells, and cast mysterious spells over animals and men. It was common belief that if butter was long in forming a witch was in the churn, and that she could be driven out only by a hot horse shoe. Old Mrs. Alger lived on the "Plains," and had a certain white(?) crow that annoyed the neighbors by its croaking. Finally someone took two silver sleeve-buttons and molded them into six small bullets, with which the crow was shot and severely wounded. It managed to fly away. Soon it was known that Mrs. Alger was seriously ill. When she died, six small bullet holes were found under her left arm.

Mill creek was full of witch and devil stories. Mrs. Hague used to see phantom droves of cattle stampeding through their standing grain. The Dolivers used to tell of a rock upon which could be seen imprinted the outlines of a man's body and beside it a cloven hoof. The man had sold his soul for gold, and had been caught here by the Devil and smashed up against the rock. On this creek lived "Old M's Tucker," short, thick-set and swarthy, and reputed to be a witch. Although she lived alone with presumably only the proverbial cat for company, yet at night figures of men and women were to be seen dancing in her brightly lighted house. She bewitched cattle, and so worked on Sanford Murry's horses that they would kick at night; they once kicked him in the head almost killing him. Old Mrs. Murry slept with steel under her head to protect herself from any spell that "Old M's Tucker" might weave. There was a headless man who harrassed his murderer by leaping up behind him when he rode abroad, covering him, his saddle and his horse with blood.

But all that is ghostly and weird seems to have centered about Dumpling Hall with its cave and mines and traditions. Around its base ran an Indian trail. At its foot lived John Brimmer, a superstitious old German, who always kept at the head of his bed a loaded rifle, into the stock of which he had placed a verse of scripture written on a piece of paper. A shot from such a gun, with which he had once made eighteen holes in a deer with a single ball, would lay low all witches and bewitches. And did he not need it?

On moonlight nights had he not seen a headless Indian dancing around an old stump in the orchard near the house? On the hill above him did there not live an old witch, who could so bewitch cattle that they would run along the tops of the fences just like squirrels? This old woman was generally a good friend of the Brimmers. Once, however, she became angry at them for some reason, and one of their cows began giving bloody milk. The old lady was finally pacified by a cup of tea, friendship was again restored and the cow gave bloody milk no more. The favorite rifle of Aaron, son of this John, Brimmer was once so bewitched that, when discharged, the bullet merely crawled out of the gun and fell without force to the earth.

Rufus Cook was a great hunter. One night he with another man shot a bear and two cubs near a deer-lick at the head of the East Branch. They were gone so long that a party started out to look for them, fearing that they had fallen into the hands of the Indians. A member of this party was Ogden of Revolutionary fame. Cook said that he once saw a deer on the hills with a "chair" on its head. This may have been an elk. He once took a load of vension to Boston, and received in payment two handfuls of silver dollars.

All the relatives of John Boldman are said to have been killed near Decker's mill-pond. Boldman spent his life avenging their death—another Tim Murphy, always going armed with knife and rifle. He once followed two Indians from the



river up the East branch to a spring near this pond, where he killed them and buried them in a deep hollow. Trailing some of his foes at another time he failed to find them. Crossing over to the head of Mill creek he stopped at a big chestnut tree. Suspecting no danger, he left the rifle at the foot and climbed up into the tree. The Indians, who had been on his trail, suddenly appeared, seized the gun that had brought death to so many of their comrades, and ordered him to come down. As Boldman was climbing down, an idea came to him. When he reached the ground he told the Indians that he was entirely in their power, but before they tied his hands, he wished to show them how to use his gun, for otherwise it would be of no value to them. They allowed him to take the rifle into his hands. Stepping back a pace he shot one of the Indians, with the butt he felled another, and then took to his heels, making good his escape.

Boldman's panther story is well known. One day, after having inbibed quite freely at the distillery that was once on the place of W. A. Secor, he and a neighbor named Dingman started for home along the old creek road. When they reached the place where the road skirts the Otsdawa ravine, one of them saw a panther in the top of a tree that just appeared above the edge of the cliff. Boldman said to his companion, "You go down and cut a club; I'll stone him out, and then you can kill him with the club." His friend agreed, and when he was ready, yelled. Boldman began to stone the panther. On the second throw he hit the animal on the head, and

down came the panther to be killed by the man with the club below.

Another story is told of this same Boldman, and the ashes that he wouldn't sell. He was in the habit of taking ashes to Otsdawa to sell to a certain Phillips at ten cents per bushel. One day he was offered fifteen cents, but indignantly refused to sell. After some discussion the merchant was persuaded to pay the regular price of ten cents, and the old soldier went away, proud of his shrewdness.

"Jose" Wiles lived on the south side of the river, and, before the town was divided, went to Franklin to pay his taxes. One year his name was omitted from the assessment roll. He was told that he had no taxes to pay that year. He became very angry and, exclaimed that "te tamm Yankees was trying to cheat him out of his taxes."

Captain George Smith, who lived in the town of Laurens, once told the following story of the Revolutionary war at the house of John King Hatheway. He was passing through a wood when suddenly an arm appeared from behind a tree and a tomahawk came hurtling through the air and struck him full on the forehead, felling him to his knees. The Indian who had hurled the weapon, thinking that the white man was killed, now rushed out with his scalping-knife to complete the terrible deed. Captain Smith had just strength enough to draw his sword, and, as the Indian rushed upon him, with all that feeble strength thrust it through the Indian's body. He heard the Indian yell, and cry, "Law me, me die," and then fainted from loss of blood. Thus had

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he gotten the great scar across his forehead that had aroused so much curiosity among the Hatheway boys.

Samuel Hyatt was eight years in the Revolution. He said that he had lost his sense of smell by eating decayed horse-flesh with its awful stench. He used to tell of the terrible deeds of the Indians and Tories, who would cut captives into pieces, burn them at the stake, or, pulling the burning brands from them just before death, stick spears into their heads and bodies, or, burying them in the ground up to their necks, use their heads as targets for burning brands, knives and stones. Hyatt was once one of a party that fell into the hands of a band of Indians. All of his companions were tortured and killed, but he was reserved till the morrow for a final feast and dance. Bound hand and foot he was placed on the ground between two Indians, feet to the fire for the night. When at last his captors fell asleep, after much effort he loosened his bonds, and lay waiting for a chance to escape. Suddenly one of the guards jumped up to fix the fire, and Hyatt thought that he would surely be discovered, but the Indian lay down again without examining his prisoner. When by their breathing he knew that the savages were asleep, he crept away. Soon he heard the yells of the Indians, who had discovered his escape and were hot on his trail. Hyatt fled through the wilderness until he came to a great swamp that barred his way. There were many old tree trunks floating on the water, and, plunging in, he buried himself in the water and mud beside one of these logs, leaving only his

nose above the surface. Here he was obliged to stay for two days while the Indians were hunting for him over the logs, crying out as a ruse, "Here he is, I've found him." Then the search ceased, and after a time Hyatt ventured forth. He washed himself, found a frog to eat and started through a trackless wilderness to look for camp or civilization. For three days he wandered, and during that time he had but one fish and two berries to eat. At last he came to a hut where lived some white people, who took him in, fed him out of their scanty store and piloted him back to a camp. Hyatt was the sole survivor of his party.

Joseph and Hiram Smith, the founders of Mormonism, are said to have lived for a time with John Youmans. This was before they found the sacred books. Orson Hyde, who lived just above Youmans, became one of the twelve apostles.

Trouble often arose between the Yankees and the "Dutch," which was not uncommonly settled by fights between chosen champions. David Scramling, who lived in a log house close to the river on what is known as the John Van Woert farm, is said to have been a Tory, who had often gone with the Indians on their marauding expeditions. When drunk, he would dance and sing like an Indian. He once threw a knife at Frederick Hess and cut his forehead. This David Scramling and Elihu(?) Smead once had a fight on the John Brimmer place. "Smead whipped him badly, bit David all over the chest—bit large pieces out, and when old David came into the house, he trembled all over, for he was very badly

whipped." There was one fistic contest that has been quoted into fame. It took place on "Saw Mill Hill," after the raising of the first saw mill there by Ransom Hunt. Three days had been spent in constructing the dam, and after the building had been successfully raised, as well as spirits by a "keg o' rum," two men were selected to fight it out, John French and Peter Scramling. They fought a spirited contest with their bare fists, and French was adjudged the victor. Peace is said to have reigned thereafter between the Yankees and the "Dutch."

Rufus Cook kept a tavern on the Thayer place on Mill creek. Here was held the presidential election of the old town of Otego in 1828. The candidates were Jackson and Adams. Enthusiasm ran high. Late in the afternoon the adherents of Adams brought down from his home near West Oneonta Captain Jenks of the Revolution to cast his vote. The Jacksonians, not to be outdone, went for old Mr. Van Slyke. They carried the old Hessian soldier up to the hotel in a chair. When asked how he voted the aged German replied, "My mind iss for Schackson," and cast his ballot amid great applause.

Timothy Murphy and two of his friends, Tufts and Evans, are said to have marked a trail from Fort Schoharie to Chanango Forks. The blaze ran along the north bank close to the river. Near it were made the early settlements in the lower part of the town. The old cemetery on the Earle Root place is said to be on this trail. A member of Murphy's band by the name of Cunningham is said to have been taken sick on one of their ex-

peditions, to have died and here to have been buried. In this old yard has been seen a common field stone into which had cut with a tomahawk, "W. C. 1777."

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